JUDY OF THE WHALE GATES

ELIZABETH BURROWS

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JUDY OF THE WHALE GATES

BOOKS BY
ELIZABETH BURROWS

IRENE OF TUNDRA TOWERS
JUDY OF THE WHALE GATES

A beacon fire on Sulphur Rock could be seen plainly by any boat that was making in through the Whale Gates.

JUDY OF THE WHALE GATES

The Strange Happenings that Followed the Stranding of the Yacht Aphoon *Among the Volcanic Islands of Alaska*

BY

ELIZABETH BURROWS

ILLUSTRATED BY
JAMES DAUGHERTY

Junior Books

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FIRST EDITION

TO

ALICE BURROWS McCORMICK

WITH LOVE

AND DEEPEST GRATITUDE

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JUDY OF THE WHALE GATES

CHAPTER I

JUDY

AT SUNRISE of that June morning Judy Ivanoff was wakened by she couldn't tell what outside the cabin Crageagles.

She raised her head from the eider-down pillows, then sat straight up, and with a single movement of her arms threw back the covers. She swung about on the edge of the bed and stretched her legs until her toes just touched the gray wolf rug on the red clay floor. Through sleepy eyes she inspected the lava ridges that spread out in the shape of a swan's ribbed foot some distance beyond the low west windows of the bedroom.

Had the disturbance come from the direction of the lava caves?

Not likely. The openings of the four shallow caves in the side of the hill wore their early morning shadows undisturbed as they faced the rising sun. There was not a sign anywhere of Tolla, the Jersey heifer, who had a way of standing with her head framed like a picture in the black opening of the south cave. Not a sound came from the goose pens under the eaves of the north cave, where usually a few white geese stood thrusting out their heads and their long necks between the pickets, hissing at nothing at all, or trying to reach bits of peat moss along the edges of the trail.

Two miles or so beyond the lava caves, at the margin of the plateau of green, rolling tundra and sphagnum mosses, of stunted willows and dwarf alders, the hills of Kala made a sharp ascent to culminate nine thousand feet above the plateau in the volcanic peak known everywhere down here among the remote islands of the Aleutian archipelago as Kusko Kala, *the mountain of the god who strikes.*

All about the summit of Kusko Kala the sunrise was washing up smoky surfs from flame-colored seas of cloud. Splashes of green sky here and there made islands in the firmament as beautiful, Judy thought, as the jade green Aleutians themselves.

And Kusko Kala, serene in the midst of all the turmoil of color and cloud, was smoking away silently. That old mountain was never the one to roar and thunder and hurl rocks as some of the more boisterous, swashbuckling young fellows on the Kala range loved to do!

"There isn't any earthquake going on," Judy reassured herself. "Kala is quiet enough now."

Judy hated to waken so early. She yawned and lay back among the pillows again and kept on wondering who could have made the disturbance that had roused her from sleep.

It couldn't have been Chak, the old Aleut fisherman, puttering about the fish racks. Yesterday morning, taking advantage of the smooth summer seas off the island of Kala, Chak had set out in his ancient motor dory for the island of Little Whale Ear, south of Ongoo, for the greenling fishing. The *ling* had been here for ten days or longer, and with Chak already behind time for the best of the *ling* fishing there was little likelihood that he had so soon as this returned to the island of Kala.

It couldn't have been Ilak, Judy's white Samoyede dog, howling so early! Nothing disturbed Ilak greatly any more. The shrilling of the sea parrots, the whirring wings of the crested auklets, the shrieking tempests about high Kala's head, the mournful cries of seagulls before storm, the faint, gossiping music of the tattlers among the salmonberry bushes—all were one to Ilak. The old dog was stone deaf.

Drowsily Judy decided that it couldn't have been Tigil either, clattering about the cow sheds and the goose pens and Ilak's corral. The courage of Tigil stood up half as high as a sitting duck. The old Eskimo woman had listened too often to Chak's tales. Of course the tales were not true, but for all that Tigil believed them!

Suddenly Judy shivered and pulled the covers up high about her head. There was one tale that Judy herself believed. The tale about the Vey'gli!

Queer! Why hadn't she thought, straight off, about the Vey'gli?

As almost everyone in Alaska knows, these Vey'gli are spirits. They are the ghosts of the brave Aleut warriors who, years and years ago, refusing to submit to the Russian conquerors of the islands, fled up into the remote hills. There still, in green, safe shadowland, they dwell. Thence, now and then, they come down to prowl about the settlements and the cabins of the lonely harbor folk. And sometimes, in remembrance of the days when they ate fish and fowl, they will steal a few geese from the pens or filch a few fat salmon-sides from the drying racks.

By this time Judy was easier in her mind. She threw back the covers again. The Vey'gli had come once more to Crageagles; that was all! What could the loss of a few geese matter? Judy wouldn't worry about the Vey'gli! At least, she wouldn't worry in broad daylight!

At twilight time, when mists in the valleys and on the trails took the shapes of men walking, the Vey'gli could be a different proposition. As a matter of fact, once, on the narrow trail along the cliffs above the Bering Sea, on the way to the Caves of the Whalers, Judy had seen someone . . . something. . . .

Judy yawned and stretched and was asleep again. And a second time something wakened her. She hadn't slept soundly. She'd just dozed off. She was pretty cer-

tain that in her sleep she had heard the echo of a man's shout borne back against the hills from the deserted harbor to the east, two hundred feet below Crageagles cabin.

Sharp fear brought the sixteen-year-old girl bounding from bed to stand for a moment shivering and desolate on the rug.

A red silk kimono hung from the back of a battered old chair. Judy caught up the garment and flung it about her shoulders and clutched the folds. She shoved her feet into her woven grass slippers with their bright red linings and at a lively clip started across the floor toward the door of her living room.

On the threshold she tripped on the rug of the Siberian wolf. Her right slipper flew off. The left went, too. And Judy brought up with a smothered gasp in the recessed alcove of the east windows on the window seat that was almost hidden under its coverings of plaited furs and cushions of hair seal.

The windows stood wide open to all the winds of Kala. The winds were salt. They smelled of kelp and of seaweed, and they tasted of the sea that Judy loved.

She put one hand on the curtains and craned her neck and looked down over the waters of the harbor that lay there in the faëry light of dawn. She strained her eyes to penetrate the distance, but for all her search she could see nothing a bit different from what it had been every morning for years past.

The shores and the gently rising, mossy green hills of the harbor swung about in a tremendous horseshoe arch to terminate toward the east, beyond the deserted

harbor and the abandoned buildings of the cod fishing station, in two monoliths known as the North Whale and the South Whale. Since the days of Captain Cook and John Ledyard the two vast headlands have been charted on the maps of the North Pacific and of the Bering Sea as the Whale Gates.

Judy looked out between the Gates.

"There's nobody at all out there," she reassured herself again. Still she felt a kind of dread upon her.

Against the light from the windows the girl was very pretty in a sturdy sort of way. Her head was small and well shaped and round, and the masses of her light brown hair curled up into little golden tips all over her head. Straight and almost black, her eyebrows shaded eyes of a lively sea blue.

Just now her eyes were clouded and her eyebrows were drawn into a frown. She was trying to account for the feeling of dread that had suddenly enveloped her.

"Oh, I do hope that Orca Pougher, the sea otter poacher, isn't on his way to the Whale Gates," she cried aloud.

Just four years ago this June, Orca Pougher's ketch, the *Fogwind,* had gone to pieces out there on the rocks of the barrier reefs. Fleetingly Judy recalled the excitement of that day. How the winds had shrieked and roared! How the seas had raged and pounded!

Between them, winds and seas had lifted the ketch high and had brought it thundering down again upon the rocks. And Judy, safe on the headlands above the reefs, clinging with her bare hands to the rocks, had

followed with passionate interest the destruction of the vessel.

Later her guardian, Peter Karazoff, had told Judy that in the shipwreck two men had lost their lives. Judy had given little heed to his words. To her, the climax of the day's emotions had come in observing Chak and Karazoff haul out from the surf the exhausted Orca and three of his men.

When these four were safe Chak had plunged again into the surf. Chak had had a rope fastened by a belt about his body. On shore, Karazoff had hauled away on the rope. He had fastened this liferope about the old wrecked prow of the barkentine, the *Seahorse,* that had once been lifted by a tidal wave over the barrier reefs to lodge midway of the cliffside on a great jutting ledge. This ledge, fully a quarter of a mile in width, ran for three or four miles south by southwest along the eastern coast of Kala. From shore and from plateau as well trails led by easy grades to this old hulk.

Thus anchored safe to the *Seahorse,* Chak had rescued three of the pigs, the white bull calf, and the fawn-colored Jersey that Pougher had been bringing with him in the *Fogwind* in crates stowed amidships.

Karazoff, or Kay, as Judy always called her guardian, afterwards told the girl that the white calf and the pigs and the cows were all pretty clear proof that the men had come with the intention of living for a long time on one of the islands, probably on Kala, or her neighbor across the impassable straits to the south, the sea otter haven of Angka.

Geologically once part of one primal island, the two,

Angka and Kala, are now binary stars of the sea, revolving eternally about that fiery sun, the volcano of Kusko Kala.

Whether in the beginning bound for Kala or for Angka and the Sea Otter Crannies, Orca and his native hunters had been forced by the wrecking of their craft to spend two months on Kala till a steamer could be signaled to stop for them.

Karazoff had furnished the men their salt and sugar, their coffee and flour and bacon. They fished a little. They caught a few tomcod in the harbor, and they speared one or two great humpback salmon in the Kala river below the basalt ledges. Once Judy observed the men digging clams on a narrow strip of beach on the north side of the harbor. Tirelessly and relentlessly, day and night, they went about the island and the abandoned buildings of the shore station searching for something.

Kay meanwhile, his face drawn and worried, his eyes smoldering with anger, had from the windows of Crageagles followed through his Zeiss glasses every move of the four whenever their search brought them within the field of his vision.

What did they want? What did they hope to find? Judy could not guess. Kay did not tell her, either then or afterwards.

After some weeks Kay had taken the men in his whaleboat out to where the power schooner, the *Flying Mist,* waited at anchor over the Kala cod banks to bear the four north again to Nome.

So, leaving Kala, they had left in Judy's heart the fear that they would come again and that next time no shipwreck would thwart their plans.

The white bull and the Jersey cow and their descendants were now members of the Crageagles menage. The six pigs, unfortunately, had at once escaped from the rickety old dress house at the end of the wharf where Chak had penned them. They had gone up into the Wild Boar Canyons on the south side of Kala. There they had joined the herd of boars that had had their own beginnings in a half dozen shoats marooned on the island in 1918, the year of the great earthquake. After the earthquake had blocked the pass between the Whale Gates the Kala Island Fishing Company had given up the venture here and the fishermen had sailed for their home ports.

Now, led by their leader, Shansii, whom Kay always called *Old Devil Shansii,* this band of wild boars had become a real menace to anyone who might try to follow the trails above the Kala straits. The members of the band occasionally furnished roast pig for the winter holiday feasts for the islanders. Mostly, however, the islanders left them undisturbed.

If, unaware of the presence of the wild boars on Kala, Orca and his band should once meet the great Shansii and his herd they would probably have a fight on their hands. The island would probably witness a battle to the death and be free forever more from Orca the Killer and his poachers!

At Dutch Harbor and at Hard Scratch Station, at

Nome and St. Michael, Orca went by the name of Orca the Killer, his given name, *Orca,* being the native word for the killer whale.

If Orca Pougher should find Toma, the sea otter mother, and her this year's baby, Jutaa, Judy felt that her heart would break! Judy had known Toma for a long time. Whenever the pod of sea otters gathered on the Sea Otter Crannies over on Angka's northwest shores, Toma and her baby always came in through the Whale Gates Pass to play in the quiet waters of Kala.

"Orca the Killer shall never have my Toma!" Judy whispered to herself now. She continued to kneel on the window seat. Her color heightened as she crouched there with her elbows on the sill. She could hardly wait to have her breakfast and set her room to rights before she set out on her day's adventuring.

After all, she would do exactly what she had planned to do to-day: go down to the harbor for a glimpse of Toma and Jutaa, and afterward spend the long day hunting for the eggs of the wild ducks and the wild geese out over the tundra. At the same time she would keep an eye out for possible signs of Orca Pougher!

Crageagles' larder still needed a supply of dozens and dozens of the eggs of wild fowl for the coming winter. This spring, fortunately, the birds had come late to the islands. There were, consequently, still to be found nests filled with the eggs of the gray goose and the emperor, or beach goose, the mallard and the white Hutchins goose. The numerous island weasels and Black Krikii, the one solitary island raven, had spoiled some of the first clutches, but the birds, those tireless

nesters, would usually go to work to produce a second clutch. These were the eggs that Judy planned to-day to gather.

Some of the eggs, those of the geese, especially, would be too "high" for Judy's use or Kay's. To Chak the Aleut and to Tigil the Eskimo serving woman, however, the "high" eggs would be especially choice food. So Judy would take whatever came to her hand.

Now she made for her bedroom, stooping on the run to snatch up her slippers. From the top of the old bureau under the high north window she took her hair brush and proceeded to brush up her hair till the short ends shone in the light like new Yukon gold.

She slipped out of her red robe and the garment fell to the rug in a heap. The girl hurried into an inner room scarcely larger than a small wardrobe. Here, winter and summer, the little window under the eaves was open at the top to let in the breeze from the hills.

From this room there came now the sound of brisk splashings. In a few moments Judy skipped back into her bedroom, then crossed again to the living room.

She was dressed now for the outdoors. She wore a very short, very old skirt of dark green woolen material and a Russian blouse of green jersey open at the throat like a forester's shirt. Her boots were of hair seal. The tops, of dehaired sealskin, had been dyed a deep orange color from the dye made by Chak in the spring from the bark of the alder tree. A béret of fawn-colored sealskin gave her the look of a lively wood nymph—just the kind of girl to live happily on an island where there were always sphagnum mosses burning some-

where, and the smell of woodsmoke lifting on the wind!

Her thoughts still busy with the idea that Orca Pougher might return to Kala, Judy moved over again to the window.

Through the pass of the Whale Gates she had a glimpse of a column of white water moving out there on the open sea.

There was a whale spouting.

And swiftly as Skurrr the bald eagle scatters the bands of crested auklets so the sight of the whale scattered Judy's worries.

After all, it was unlikely that Orca had come back to Kala! If the poachers *had* come, if they had beached their dory on the little strip of landwash outside the Gates, awaiting there a favorable wind and the rising tide to carry their halibut ketch this time safely through the pass, the men would already have seen the whale cruising out there. And the whale once seen by the poachers, probably not even the truculent Orca would have been able to restrain his native hunters from launching their bidarkas or their motor dories and setting out in swift pursuit.

So Judy settled it. She laughed happily as she took one last reassuring look at the old 'longshore whale. She closed the east windows behind her, then sliding down on a low bench beside a console table of mahogany she clapped her hands and called out in a low, clear voice:

"Tigil! Oh, Tigil!"

Then she waited with both elbows on the table.

Table and bench had been made from the salvaged

plankings from a government launch once wrecked on the barrier reefs. The outer surface of the wood was now polished to a shade of brown like the brown of the tundra willows in winter, but the inner surface still carried the marks of Kay's adz. "Like any sourdough turned civilized," Kay had once said.

Now Judy leaned over and shook a sealskin cushion at one end of a long bench. Something came alive from the middle of the flat cushion. It was Sun-up-sun, Judy's tiny Pekingese.

"Come, little one," said Judy.

She took the Pekingese in her arms and cuddled him for a moment and murmured over him as young girls will always murmur over dogs and dolls.

The coat of Sun-up-sun was a deep orange color. His little head was of exquisite shape with well set ears and dark eyes.

"You'll have a long old lonesome day, Sun-up-sun-sy!" whispered Judy, patting the sleek head.

Then she plumped Sun-up-sun down on the floor, for there had come a rapping at a door concealed under geranium colored hangings in the north wall of the room. That must be Tigil with the breakfast. Judy could hear the old Eskimo servant setting down the trays on the serving table in the covered passageway that connected this room with Tigil's own cabin.

She crossed the floor, flung back the curtains, and opened the door into the passageway. There was Tigil. Her grizzled hair hung in a thin braid down between her shoulders. Her bent frame was hidden in a blue

and white gingham dress made like an old-fashioned Mother Hubbard wrapper.

"Good morning!" said Judy. "Come in, Tigil!"

Tigil lifted one of the trays and crossed the threshold. On this tray she was carrying an unlighted samovar, the charcoal in place and the chimney adjusted. Tigil placed her burden on the table before Judy, who had sat down again on the bench. Then Tigil lighted the samovar and left the room to return shortly with a second tray, on which were a cup and saucer and a plate, a bowl of gray pottery, and an old pottery teapot and the breakfast silver. This tray the serving woman put down on the table at Judy's right hand. Then she said in her low Eskimo voice, "Mornin'!" just as she *always* said "mornin' " after the trays were safe on table, never before!

Judy nodded happily. She threw her cap over to the end of the bench and ran her fingers through her golden-brown hair. Sun-up-sun climbed aloft and sat on the cap, where he looked like a fashionable, if overgrown, orange pom-pon on a tam-o'shanter!

Judy tapped the samovar and filled the teapot with boiling water. Presently she poured out for herself a cup of delicious fragrant tea. She spread a slice of dark bread with yellow butter. There was a bowl of preserved Kala mossberries. She spread the buttered slice thick with preserves and sat munching away, with frequent quaffings of the tea, which she took in Kay's fashion, black and strong.

She was wondering meanwhile where good old Kay was having his breakfast this morning. At Nome? At

Dutch Harbor? Or at the Hard Scratch Shore Station where he'd planned to stop on his way home to Kala?

Judy glanced at the geranium colored curtains at doors and windows, and for some reason there flashed into her mind something that had happened on her birthday four years ago. That day, for the first time Judy could recall, she had been willfully unruly and disobedient.

It had come about in this way: Late on the afternoon of her birthday, she had gone exploring where her guardian had forbidden her ever to go. Such fun as she had had—at first! Not afterward!

How she had prowled about that top cabin storeroom where Kay had put away the boxes and bales and the burlap-covered chests which, in the old days before 1918, he used to send off on steamers to wherever it was he sent them!

In a corner of the storeroom Judy had found a bale of something wrapped in coverings of burlap and lettered in Chinese characters. The mystery had fascinated little Judy. She had poked at the bale. She yanked it and hauled at it and dragged it across the floor a little way. She punched it and pounded it until in one place the contents shifted a little and Judy, now wildly excited, was certain that her fingers had found a doll.

For only a second she pondered the right and the wrong of her actions. Then deliberately, like the little freebooter she was that day, she determined to go on with her adventure.

One jiffy and she was down the ladder from the storeroom to Kay's quarters! Another jiffy, and she was

in Kay's study, a room that smelled of every kind of tobacco in the known world. The next jiffy and she had Kay's desk shears. The next she was up the ladder again and across the creaking floors of the storeroom, and was squatting back on her heels on the floor by the mysterious bale snipping with the shears at the burlap covering. Presently she thrust aside the wrapping and searched about inside the roll, secure in the faith that she was going to find the doll she had always prayed that she might sometime have! A real doll! Such a doll as Kay, who brought her so many things from Nome, had never thought to bring her! Not the usual doll of the islands, a creature of kelp and seaweed with brown kelp bulb for a head and monstrous round orange eyes and orange nose and orange mouth stained in with the alder dye. Not a doll made by stuffing white sewn sailcloth with peat mosses and drawing eyes and nose and mouth on the cloth with Kala charcoal till the thing looked like a weird monster out of the depths of ocean—all staring eyes and a mouth voracious and unearthly!

Well, after all, Judy had uncovered just roll after roll of geranium colored silk brocade wrapped about a jade Buddha, who had mocked at her as he lay swaddled in his silken wrappings. The upshot was that little Judy had sat right down on the floor again and cried and the tears had trickled down between her fingers, and her throat had uttered strange noises.

And Kay, hearing the snuffling, had come climbing up the ladder and had found Judy crying there. The Buddha lay beside her on the floor. Judy had done for

the Buddha by whacking his head against an old sea chest. Nor could she feel very sorry when Kay informed her sternly that this Buddha had belonged to some famous creature who went by the name of *Ming!*

Through the long night that followed the afternoon of adventure Kay left Judy to herself to think over her misdeeds.

The next morning she had been haled to Kay's study. Her head down, tears trickling across her cheeks again, she had stood just inside Kay's door and all the while she was wiping her eyes with the back of a hand that still seemed to prickle with fuzz from the burlap.

So Judy had stood before Kay in Kay's trig study, compact as a ship's cabin; before Kay in his disreputable old khaki clothes; before Kay smoking slowly on his ancient pipe with its stem made from the bone of a goose's wing; before Kay himself, who had looked at her from under his shaggy brows and had said:

"You did a good job with the silk, my dear! From now on you'd better use it for anything you need in the way of draperies and curtains for the cabins."

Kay taking long pulls at his old goose-wing pipe!

"You are to spend the rest of the morning cutting little holes in the red silks from Shanghai. I would suggest perhaps a half-inch cut for every fold—to match the pattern you worked out yesterday. Neat—very neat!"

Kay tilting back his head and looking up at the low rafters of his study!

"You cry at the thought? It does not make you happy? Then let your unhappiness remind you that there are

certain places on the island where you may not go. To the unwary and the willful and the thoughtless the island of Kala brings—disaster. Never forget that—little daughter of the Ivanoffs!"

Kay's tired old eyes! His gnarled fingers shaking on the stem of the old pipe!

A nod from Judy's bright golden-brown head. A stream of tears running down Judy's lifted wrist to lodge in a soppy Jersey sleeve over Judy's wet elbow!

Then in a kindlier voice Kay had said, "Tell me, little one, where have I forbidden you to go?"

With her head up now and her blue eyes fixed fearlessly on Kay's eyes, Judy had said, "I will never go again to the storeroom, Kay! And I will never go again with my bow and arrows to hunt the littlest wild boars on the hills and in the cañons above the straits."

"Then you *have* hunted there since the time when I told you of the danger?"

Judy nodded.

"Yes, Kay! You didn't really tell me *not* to go, Kay, dear!" Thus she cajoled him. "I killed a little sucking pig there last month. We had it for dinner the evening of Decoration Day. Don't you remember?"

Kay's grizzled head shot up. Judy met his eyes. The corners of his mouth twitched. He nodded and smiled and his attitude changed briskly as Judy had foreseen that it would change!

"I thought, my dear, that Chak had killed the little sucking pig. Well, Judy, lass, you are never to go again up to the wild boar trails. If you go again . . ." But even now, Kay would not exact a promise, or make any

threat to train her in deception and cowardice. "Run along now and finish your job with the silks," he commanded her, and turned his head away and looked into the fire on his hearth. "You will find the bale in your living room," he called after her.

The hearth needed brushing, too, but Judy didn't stop, now, to order Kay's room!

She went to her own rooms. There, on the hearth, sure enough, was the wretched bale.

Judy divined that within twenty-four hours Kay would have forgotten all about the red silks of Shanghai. But Judy could never forget. She was not afraid of Kay, even when he was so terribly abrupt. She understood his mannerisms. She really often liked his brusqueness. That irritable fierce abruptness made it seem as if Kay were treating Judy as he would an equal. To Judy it was as if Kay accepted her as a partner in whatever Kala ventures were under way.

Gradually, too, she had come to understand that Kay was always in a kind of frenzy of fear lest she come to harm because of her own fearlessness. It was for that reason, perhaps, that he had suffered Chak to tell Judy the stories about the Vey'gli. Even old wives' tales, old hunters' tales about the spirits might somehow limit Judy's venturesomeness. And Kay was right. They did!

Judy expected that Kay would bring her, from Nome, some new materials for curtains and window drapes and kimonos and linings for slippers. Wouldn't she have a glorious time sewing on something besides red brocade! The last piece of the old silk was now in

service. It would last for years, of course, but for all that, Kay had promised to buy her new material. When Judy had asked him, he had stood with his tired old eyes clear of any faintest recollection of what Judy always called her "red brocade punishment."

"Of course, if you need them!" Kay had agreed.

Judy had run off to Tigil's kitchen and had returned with a mail order catalogue in her hand.

"I know exactly what I want, then!" Judy had cried delightedly. She cleared the top of the console table and opening the catalogue, spread it flat on the table and lost herself for hours in contemplation of pictured windows with hangings colored in white and blue and yellow, in white bordered in all the colors of the rainbow.

She decided to have Kay get dimity or even cheesecloth for the windows. She would have a different color for each of the three cabins: pink, of course, for Tigil's, and green—a sort of sage green—for Kay's, and for her own cabin windows yellow—the yellow of primroses.

Suddenly now she jumped up from the bench and snatched her béret from under the orange pompon. At the same time she upset Sun-up-sun. She ran to the door again and called down the passageway to ask Tigil to put her up a lunch and admonished her not to forget to give Sun-up-sun his special breakfast again at nine o'clock. He had his first breakfast every morning in Tigil's kitchen. On her way back through the living room she knelt down on a gray wolf rug with one knee to the rug, and making a loop of her hands

teased Sun-up-sun to come and put his orange head through the loop. He came to help Judy "make her picture," as she called it. Then Judy stooped down and swept the dog's head with her smooth cheek. After that she piled the china and the silver on the trays again and hurried off to her bedroom, her mobile face alive with anticipation and a kind of energetic fervor thrilling through her at the thought of her hours to come out on the Kala trails.

With Judy gone, the living room with its shabby old chairs and its great fireplace and its low couch covered with white reindeer blankets suddenly became a drab enough place.

The room was very long and wide with low windows on the east and west. The walls were made of logs and of ships' timbers from wrecked vessels. In the days when Karazoff had been the superintendent of the Kala Bay Cod Fishing Company, the fishermen who had taken native wives and had thereafter lived all the year round at the shore station instead of sailing in September for home ports, had lugged the timbers up the hill. In return for their work Karazoff had given each one a monthly stipend from October until March, when the fishing schooners came again to Kala.

The walls of the living room had been chinked with clay from the old Russian brickyard across the harbor. Now, blackened from the smoke of many fires, of moss fires and fires of driftwood, the walls furnished a dark background for the red brocade curtains that hung at the windows, suave and sophisticated and utterly foreign to what was otherwise a crude interior, overhung

by rafters that still bore the marks of adz and saw, and floored with red clay.

On the walls was a panoply of Aleut spears and whale harpoons and bolas which Karazoff had collected in expeditions to the various islands of the vast archipelago. At the south end of the room there was a fireplace, its frame and mantel of obsidian-like polished black glass, the stones all marked with veinings of buff and deep yellow, the shade of sulphur.

Hours on hours had Judy spent in the long winter evenings at Crageagles tracing islands and states and rivers and chains of lakes on the maps that were etched in the stones by these veinings of color.

The red clay floor was spread with three rugs of the Siberian wolf. On each side of the fireplace, shelves of books in a variety of bindings extended to the low ceiling. Many of the volumes in gold-lettered dark leather bespoke someone's interest in the things of Asia.

Here were a dog-eared *Gobi* and a book of the maps of the Roy Chapman Andrews expeditions. *The Revolt of Asia* stood next to *Russian Imperial Gems. Siberian Ports and Smugglers* was neighbor to *Samoyede and Chuckchee.*

There were Judy's books, too: a *Life of Louisa M. Alcott,* and *Jo's Boys,* and *Treasure Island.* There were several shabby volumes of poems. A volume of Blake and another of Keats had scarcely any covers to speak of. Judy loved poetry. Her mind, nurtured in solitude among the splendors of seas and mountains and barren shores, of winds and sea creatures and birds that fairly lifted the sky on their "million multipled dark wings,"

turned to poetry as naturally as the fur seal turns in spring toward the stormy Pribilofs.

Here by Crageagles' hearth Judy and Karazoff did their reading in winter, and Judy modeled in clay golden eagle and sea lion, kittiwake and walrus and the little short eared owl, from whose liver the Aleuts made a love-philter.

Let the winds outside batter at Crageagles' chimneys, let the trails run white with suds as the rains came pelting down, Judy would go on modeling, and dreaming all the time of the days when she was to win fame with her sculpturing! Fame! Yes, and riches, too! Then she'd have money enough to buy Karazoff the 'round-the-world trip he longed for, and, besides, every book in print!

Upon a low table which stood below two high windows on the north side of the room there was a bowl of jasper from Kolyvan. This morning the jasper bowl held blooms of the island columbine. The flowers ran through all the colors from faint pink to deep rose, from gray and violet to richest purple.

At the other end of the table a flat pottery bowl of Judy's modeling was filled with yellow lupine.

Judy loved flowers and in spring and summer, and until late in the autumn, too, had them everywhere about the rooms of the cabins.

Now Judy made her bed and ordered her dressing-room. And all the time she kept singing and humming snatches of old-fashioned songs, for she knew no others.

She sang over and over again the words of her favorite song:

"Drink to me only with thine eyes
And I will pledge with mine!"

Her voice rang with a kind of subdued happiness as she uttered the inspired words, for she was thinking, meanwhile, as she always did when she hummed that stanza:

"By and by someone will come sailing down through the Whale Gates to find me!" When her lover came sailing down through the Gates he should find Judith of the islands waiting for him!

Together they would go all day long following the trails over the tundra. They would search out all of Kala's mysteries. They would learn all Kala's lore of winds and waters and mountains. Perhaps they would even dare the forbidden mysteries of the Caves of the Whalers!

At evening time with their shoulders together and their arms about each other they would sit on the watch-tower cliffs of the Whale Gates. They would look far out as night came down to hide the barrier reefs and the white surfs and the waters of the North Pacific. They would build a beacon fire for mariners. And then —then—Judith's splendid lover would sing to Judith:

"Drink to me only with thine eyes!"

It would be all right with Judy if the lover who was coming knew a few modern jazzy songs, too, of the kind Judy had been reading about for months past in the *Purple Tattler*. The *Tattler* was a college magazine that someone still kept sending to a young man who had

left Kala about fifteen years ago, Kay said. Every spring and every fall when Kay went to Dutch Harbor for the mail, he would bring with him a sackful of *Purple Tattlers*. Judy liked them. That was reason enough for Kay to load his schooner *Timandra* with tons of *Tattlers!*

If Kay would only relent this time and bring a radio set from Nome! Then Judy would learn the new songs for herself! But Kay became almost apoplectic when Judy teased for a radio. Sometimes Judy thought she never should understand the queer likes and dislikes of this guardian of hers! *No radio on Kala!* Well, Kay's word was law, so Judy couldn't help herself to modern songs.

"And I will ple-dge with mine!"

Judy straightened the clutter of her last evening's work at the modeling table and wrapped her lump of clay in a cloth freshly dampened. She took the goose-wing brush from the nail by the hearth and, stooping down, carefully brushed up the ashes of last evening's fire. She closed the west windows now, for a glance outside had shown her mists gathering thick about Kala's head—sure sign of fogs to follow in the valleys and after the fogs, rain!

She went to her dressing-room and washed her hands, then she flung her old rubber poncho over her arm, crossed the living-room, and opening the outer door stepped outside and closed the door behind her.

She ran down the short flight of steps to the trail in front of the cabin. Here she faced about and stood for

a moment surveying the dark old dwelling perched on its mossy plateau like a sooty-black crested auklet perched on a cliff.

Through half-shut speculative eyes Judy looked at the front windows. How would those windows look in curtains of primrose yellow cheesecloth after years of their red brocade?

Close to Judy's south wing and connected with Judy's quarters by the covered passageway, were Tigil's two small rooms and her kitchen and beyond Tigil's domain, Kay's quarters ran out toward the north in the shape of a T square. The south-to-north leg of the square was Kay's living-room; the east-to-west, his study.

Over the three wings spread a timbered superstructure which was lighted by four narrow slits of windows fitted with sheets of mica instead of glass. This upper story was the top cabin storeroom of Judy's birthday misadventure four years ago.

Great blocks of obsidian held down the cabin roofs. Each block had been anchored to ground or to lava ridges by means of chains of steel. Thus Kay wagered with the elements that Crageagles' roof would sit tight when the winter storms tore in through the Gates and broke in fury against the peaks of Kala.

On a little slope beyond the lava ridges Judy had a garden. Potatoes were growing here. There were three rows of lettuce. There were straight rows of turnips, and a few other vegetables—scallions and onions and radishes. In a pool beneath a little stream

of water that trickled down from under a cliff, flourished a clump of watercresses.

The fish-cache stood on its high stilts to the west of the garden. A short ladder led up to the narrow platform before the wooden door of the storage house where in former days the fish and the game, the seal meat and the whale steaks had been safe in wintertime from the prowling dogs of the fishermen.

Judy climbed the ladder and balanced awkwardly on the platform. She unlatched the door, and throwing it wide open reached into the interior of the cache and removed from the rack a side of salmon. She held the fish in her left hand and with her right shut the door again and fastened it with a turn of the wooden latch. Then, after she had carefully felt her way down the first two rungs of the ladder, she hopped off backward to the ground. Once on the ground again, she raced off for Ilak's corral in the second cave. Here Ilak, whose sense of smell had apparently never been impaired by age, awaited her with little whines of eagerness.

Judy tossed Ilak his fish and stood there looking at him through the fence pickets while he gulped down his breakfast and then begged for more. "Sorry, Ilak, old fellow!" said Judy, just as if Ilak were really hearing what she said. "Not another bite to-day. You'll get fat and cross!"

In chummy monologue she notified Ilak that his imprisonment would come to an end as usual with the close of the breeding and nesting season of the birds on the island.

Then Judy moved over to the woven willow cage

where Whispii, the little white weasel, wriggled about like a miniature Ilak in anticipation of *his* breakfast. Whispii, too, would have the run of Crageagles, by and by, when his broken leg was wholly mended. To Whispii she gave some seal meat.

Tipii, the lame seagull, had seal meat, too.

In a safe place under the eaves of the cow sheds, Tipii lived now. He no longer had to fear the talons and beak of Kraaa the golden eagle, of Skurrr the bald eagle, or the fierce onslaughts of the Peale's falcon, or duck hawk, who had once almost put an end to Tipii's career in a pitched battle down by the wharves.

Fortunately Judy had come tearing round a corner at the critical second. She had beaten off the duck hawk with a club and so saved Tipii from destruction, if not from injury.

Never again would the gray gull with his eyes like yellow jade, patrol his sector of the beach of Kala, feeding on the beach fleas, those delicious amphipod crustaceans that hide under the seaweed for the express delectation of hungry gulls and auklets. Since the falcon, or duck hawk, had broken Tipii's wing, Judy had never let him go alone to hunt for beach fleas.

She always took the seagull with her, however, when she explored the island. When she picked blackberries or salmonberries or gathered the great bundles of elymus or wild rye, or bound great bales of sphagnum mosses to dry for winter fires, she would fasten Tipii by means of the sealskin leash attached by a metal band to his leg. Then, tethered to willow branch or even a little pillar of lava or a mere boulder, Tipii could poke

about to the limits of his tether with Judy always at hand to protect him.

Now Judy adjusted the metal band and the leash, tucked Tipii in the crook of her left arm, stepped to the kitchen door, and took the packet of lunch that Tigil had ready for her, and then raced down the trail toward the harbor.

CHAPTER II

TOMA THE SEA OTTER

BREATHLESS, Judy arrived at the harbor and at a running broad jump leaped across a narrow stream and landed on her knees on the beach beside a great driftlog that she called the *Eirie*.

She stowed Tipii away on a perch among a pile of loose drift to the right of the log and flung the free end of his leash over a forked branch. After that, using as footholds and handholds snubbed knots where branches doubtless had been broken off in the derelict's sea journeyings, Judy clambered up the side of the *Eirie* as expertly as a "gob" swarms up a ship's ladder.

She arrived at the top and stretched out flat on the broad saddle of the log. She folded her arms under her head. She balanced her béret on the toe of her right boot. She wagged her foot to and fro and caught the cap on the toe of the left boot.

All about her, across the waters of the harbor, the saucer-shaped hills wore their mantles of green velvet. Beyond the shore line to the south from where she lay, the marshes stretched for perhaps three miles to make a spongy wall along the Kala river. The islanders called the marshes the Bogwaddies, or the Waddies. In the peats of the Waddies were still to be found the bones

of the hairy mammoth that had come browsing down the Aleutian bridge from Siberia perhaps a million years ago.

Ptarmigan whistled from the hills. Crested auklets launched themselves in clouds of flight from the cliffs with a droning whirr of wings. The little auklets, the chookchies, or "little captains" of the Russians, darkened the waters of the harbor.

"Oh, joy be! joy be!" thought Judy.

She had to herself another long and glorious island day! Sometimes she almost hoped that no one would ever learn that the passage between the Whale Gates was again free from the rocks and other detritus lodged there at the time of the earthquake in 1918.

Since that time no ship had ever tried to enter the harbor. On all the charts the Pass was now designated as "not navigable." And probably no one in all the world save Kay and Judy and old Chak knew that three years ago a second severe earthquake shock had cleared the pass again! The Whale Gates were now as free as the winds of the North Pacific that blew between their pylons!

Busy probably with the charting of commercial waters in the Inside Passage and with surveys of the more accessible coasts, the Coast and Geodetic Surveys had since 1918 passed the Whale Gates by!

Did Orca Pougher know that the Whale Gates were once more open? Safe for the passage of ships? Would Orca learn up there at Nome, where Kay was staying away for such a dreadfully long time, would Orca learn that Karazoff was planning to bring in the boats again?

Would Karazoff's negotiations at Nome bring Orca down here again on spying bent?

Judy flopped over and lay with her elbows on the saddle of the log, her chin in her cupped hands. She looked everywhere for Toma, the sea otter mother, and her little baby Jutaa. But nowhere could she catch a glimpse of them!

Instead she saw only the tides running red with sunrise colors still, though the sun was now quite high. All the surface of the harbor waters was writhing with serpents. Golden dragons rode down the tide currents. Old green and silver pythons twisted and twined in the sun. Madly they came racing shoreward as if intent upon jerking down by the legs the green teal and the mallards that were bobbing about on the water just beyond the tip of Judy's log.

If only the sea would bring Toma here!

The sea could if it would!

Judy had a great opinion of the power of old Sea.

Sometimes she would think, "When you come right down *to* it, Sea owns everything. Everything that *is* at all comes from Sea. Sea owns the whale spouting out there on the ocean. Sea owns all the whales that follow the path of the waters.

"Sea owns Kraaa the golden eagle and his mate Amber Tip and Skurrr the bald eagle. Sea owns the hair seals and the walrus and the polar bear, and the fur seals away in the God knows where of the Bering Sea far to the north and east of Kala.

"Sea owns the volcanoes Kusko Kala and the Puffing Pig, which flops out of the sea like the porpoise for

which it is named. Sea owns the halibut and the cod in their billions and the greenling and the salmon and the mussels and the squid.

"Only old Sea knows where the salmon stay in winter. Only Sea knows where the eels come from. Sea scatters the plankton on which the fishes feed. Sea owns all."

And, would you believe it? Once Kay had told Judy that even in the blood of men old Sea is ruler still. Therefore must men, who have all come up from the sea, have each a drop of iodine in the blood to make that blood sea-water still!

Old mystery Sea!

Was that Toma at last out there on the water? Judy sat straight up on her log. The color coursed into her cheeks as she strove to see through the curtain of mists that had fallen swift as the drop of a falcon over the waters.

"Oh!" she cried in a forlorn whisper, "I can't see a thing now!"

She was very much disgusted. She lay flat on the log again and kicked her heels and paid no heed when Tipii pulled his leash taut and tried to hop down on the beach to chase beach fleas from their hiding places under some drying seaweed.

The wind was rising. Judy could hear the breakers of the North Pacific beginning to thunder against the barrier reefs of the semicircular lagoon far outside of the Whale Gates.

"Wind's east," she thought. "It's just the kind of day for things to come in through the Pass."

Borne on the rising wind there came the faint ushering sough of the seas. A great storm was making after days of lovely weather! And a storm now meant probably delay in Kay's returning. Oh, dear!

Judy clambered down from the log. She stooped over and drew forth from a cranny beneath it a telescope scarred and shabby. With the glasses the girl swept the harbor waters, from which the erratic fogs were now lifting.

No Toma!

Patiently Judy waited. Since her earliest years she had lived on Kala, and the island had trained her in expectancy and in patience—such patience and expectancy as only islands know that wait eternally for the encroaching sea.

Judy saw life stirring everywhere on Kala, for like most islanders she saw most when she appeared to be least observant.

High above the red cap of Kusko Kala soared Kraaa the golden eagle. Likely as not Kraaa too was waiting for Toma!

"Oh, Sea, guard Toma well!"

Through her glasses Judy followed the flight of some lean Pacific eiders from the heights of Puffin Island to the north and west of the harbor. These were the male birds, probably, flying off to the shallow north cove where they would dive for the live food which their mates, fat in the breeding season, always insisted upon having as their portion. No wonder the hard working males were such a scrawny lot!

From the spires of Puffin darted the Peale's falcon.

"Fly away, Duck Hawk! Tipii's safe at last though he'd rather live dangerously—and be free!"

Just to see whether the seagull were asleep or awake Judy twitched the sealskin leash a little. Tipii forthwith hopped down to a place beside her on the log. Then Judy tapped him on the back and he squatted down so low that he looked almost like a piece of driftwood, too. Only when Judy looked sharp she could see his yellow-rimmed eyes moving and his feathered breast just stirring from his breathing.

Again the girl turned toward the harbor.

And now she could see plainly a dark body floating on the tide, a dark body washed all about with silver smoke as the tide waves brushed up and broke upon it softly.

That was Toma, the sea otter mother. She was like a picture; or she was like a tiny islet floating in a lake of silver!

Suddenly Judy's heart gave a sharp tick of fear!

"Where can Jutaa be?" she cried. *"Where can* she be?"

Judy leaned farther forward with her hands on the log and teetered back and forth.

"There's Jutaa, too! There you are, you darling! I thought that Kraaa or Amber Tip had got you just as they got your sister two years ago!"

And then right before Judy's eyes Toma rolled over on her back. She was lying there on the water as all sea otter mothers do, floating on her back on the water with her baby folded close to her heart.

The two came drifting nearer. Judy was wild with

happiness. She was almost certain that she could hear Toma's low, crooning song, the song that sea otters have always sung to their babies.

Judy laughed with joy. She sank down on the sand beside the log and crooned a song that she herself had sung to Toma the very first summer's day this year that the sea otter had come in through the Whale Gates.

For by this time Judy and Toma knew each other so well that they would almost talk to each other. Toma would float up near shore and sometimes she would lie there with just her head and her dark eyes and shoulders showing. She would come swimming up close to Judy's log. She would regard Judy from her soft dark eyes and would show no fear.

Now as she came floating on her back with her baby clasped in her arms, Judy crooned her song:

Pumice stone floating on the water
Is like your sea drenched body, O Toma!
Sea wrack brings you down between the Whale Gates!
Here in the safe waters of the Whale Kings
Rest you awhile!
Sing a cradle song of the rocking waters
To the little Jutaa!

And then, just as naturally as if she were talking to someone across the room—to Tigil or to Kay, Judy went on:

"Be watchful over Jutaa, O sea mother! Orca the Killer Whale is coming down the sea ways of the Bering Sea and of the North Pacific toward Kala! Beware!"

It was exactly as if Toma had understood every

word. She looked straight into Judy's eyes and the excited Judy could actually have persuaded herself that Toma understood. Over and over Judy hummed her crooning song. And Toma and Jutaa floated and swam with the tide on the bay.

When the incoming tide reached the tip of Judy's log, and the sun came out and the valleys and the hillsides were bright once more with returning green and silver, Judy looked at her wrist watch. She remembered that she had a big day's work to do before evening.

When she looked back again toward the harbor Toma had disappeared. The girl reached up for her poncho. From the pocket she took the brown paper parcel of lunch. She opened the parcel and scanned the contents with healthy interest. She was glad that Tigil had given her a sandwich filled with lettuce and radishes. Tipii could have the piece of cheese. Judy gave Tipii the chunk of cheese and some bread. She ran down to the water's edge and scrubbed her hands with sand and salt water, ran back to her log and sat in the lee of the driftpile, eating with relish the sandwich and thin strips of smoked salmon, island fare of which she was very fond.

And all the time that Judy was eating her lunch, tossing stones into the water, or teasing Tipii, a little old man who had an odd yellow face and slanting dark eyes, a man who wore dark trousers and a loose black coat was sitting with his hands in his sleeves, on the lowest step of the short flight of pumice stone steps that led to Judy's cabin.

And the little old man, too, was keeping close watch on the harbor and the passage between the Whale Gates. For he, too, was expecting someone to come sailing down through the Gates into the wide harbor of Kala!

CHAPTER III

BEACON FIRES ON KALA

ABOUT two o'clock in the afternoon Judy found herself following a slope that dipped down past Sea Lion Lake. Just below the lake she began to follow the course of a clear little stream that curled down through the meadow. This was a favorite feeding place for the white Hutchins goose. Here Judy hoped to find a few clutches of eggs.

The stream had cut its way deep into the soft soil. Along its sides an impenetrable network of mosses and other green plants had grown so thickly, with roots so completely intertwined that the low, vertical banks resembled sheets of fine basket weave. In fact, the network of rootlets was so dense that it had actually prevented the stream from widening out. Grass tops hung thick over the side of each bank.

Judy rounded a boulder, picking her way cautiously, and stood for a moment on a clump of niggerhead preparatory to jumping across a marshy spot to a smooth stretch of green moss that looked promising. Judy had had no luck all the afternoon. Perhaps now her luck would change.

She stooped down and with a scoop of her right arm started to lift aside the heavy growth of grasses right

under her hand. Suddenly she dropped down. She felt the water soaking through her short green skirt over her knees, which were now deep in the wet moss. She gave no heed to the consequent discomfort. Her eyes fixed on a spot on the green moss before her, she frowned and brushed her hand across her forehead as if to clear her vision of some obstruction. She sat back on her heels and rubbed her eyes hard. There *must* be something wrong with her eyes!

On that clump of moss Judy saw, as plain as a duck's foot, the imprint of a hob-nailed boot! She was so greatly astonished that she lost her breath entirely. Every one of the four islanders on Kala wore boots made of sealskin. Not once in a year's time did any islander put on "store shoes." Hair seals were to be had for the taking and boots made of sealskin were more comfortable than shoes of tanned leather. Sometimes, of course, Kay or Chak or Tigil or Judy would put on "store shoes" just as they *always* wore "store clothes." But the feet of the islanders, accustomed to following island trails, went swifter and more surely, shod in mukluks made from the pelts of the hair seal.

Yet here on Kala now someone was wearing hob-nailed boots! Who could it be?

Judy was still on her knees studying the bootprint in the moss. The longer she looked, the more puzzled she became. She was shaken to her marrow by the shock of this discovery and she sat there dazed, trying to weigh the significance of her "find."

She decided finally that she had no real cause for fear. After all, Orca Pougher and his poachers had

probably come in last night through the Pass. That was why all day her thoughts had been haunted by the dread of Orca's coming. Perhaps the men had gone prowling about the Crageagles cabins to find what they could find: geese in the pen, ducks hanging in the cache, salmon sides too, and some rich milk in the pans on the shelves in the lean-to behind Tigil's kitchen.

Some of the rascals had probably scouted through these lower upland meadows. They had gathered all the eggs early this morning. That was why Judy herself had had no luck. If she had had her wits about her, she'd have spied bootprints like this a dozen times before now. At daylight the poachers had withdrawn again outside the Gates. Foreseeing a storm, they had set forth again for Ongoo far to the north or perhaps they had even dared to round southeastern Angka and had thus found a landfall there.

So once more Judy settled it. Very much relieved but still upset in nerves through the shock of finding that strangers had arrived in Kala harbor, even though, obviously, the strangers had almost at once departed again, Judy walked over the tundra for a long time still hunting for eggs.

At four o'clock a fog settled down again over the hills and Judy flung her poncho over her shoulders, her head emerging from the hole in the middle of the rubber garment like a golden-brown butterfly on an umbrella-shaped dark toadstool.

Rain followed the fog. Then the wind came, but Judy gave no heed to any of them, for she had grown almost to womanhood on the island and had worn the

fogs and the rains as a mantle too often to notice them at all.

By and by the wind died down and left the world clean and sweet-smelling, redolent of wild grasses, of salt sea mosses, and sea winds, of driftwood, and salt fish smells from the old butts and kenches and racks in salting house and dress house and drying house of the shore station.

Thick and breath-taking, the fog came down again—a typical Aleutian fog. Heavier and more menacing sounded the roar of the breakers outside the Whale Gates.

"The blasts of the terrible are as a storm against the wall," so sang Judy, her voice rising and falling with a little *boom*—boom of excitement as she tried to remember all the words of Kay's old baritone song.

Why didn't Kay come back? Why didn't he come back? For eight weeks he had been absent from Kala and during all that time Judy had had no word from him. There was no way by which Kay could send her word unless from Ongoo, or from Hard Scratch Station, he might dispatch an Aleut native in his cockle-shell bidarka to dare the surfs and the tide-rips and the sometimes mountainous seas to bring a message to Judy.

What problems Judy woud have to face alone if Kay failed to return! Winter would be following soon on the heels of summer. They must put up such stores of fish and game for the Crageagles larders! Could Judy ever plan it all out—alone? Could she endure to stay on Kala with her old guardian away up in the North

at Nome? With Kay ill? Needing her terribly, somewhere?

Judy gave a little cry. She stumbled over a long runner of moss. That moss reminded her of other work that must be done. Tigil and Judy must gather tons of sphagnum mosses to dry out for use in the fireplaces and in Tigil's old Russian stove, or petchka, of brick. They would use the peat mosses, too, for spreading on the floor of Ilak's corral and on the floors of the goose pens to keep them clean and sanitary.

Some sunny day soon, Tigil and Judy would gather, too, great stores of the wild rye or elymus. They would carry it in bundles down the hill to the shore station and spreading it out in the old shacks and sheds would dry it for fuel.

Perhaps in spite of Tigil's growing stubbornness, Judy could persuade the native woman to do a little extra work every day in preparation for the coming on of winter on Kala. Kay had said that perhaps Tigil was having a touch of isolation neurosis. Judy thought it just a bad case of temper brought on by the fact that last year Kay had sent back to the Yukon country Tigil's twenty-year-old son, Luk, the dwarf.

Last spring about the time when the fishing boats set out for the cod banks in March or early April, Luk had suddenly become a menace to the peace of Crag-eagles, as Shansii was a menace to the trails of Kala.

Such mad notions in poor Luk's mind! He had suddenly become so jealous of Judy's fondness for Ilak and Tipii and Whispii that Kay had packed him off in Chak's bidarka to a fishing schooner and had told him

to take himself off to the Yukon and never come back.

And now Tigil had begun to say that she must go back to the tundra to the Yukon village to visit her son. Luk had sent word by an Eskimo mate on a tramp freight boat that he had bought a three-masted schooner with the money Kay had given him. Now he was buying muskrat pelts and was planning to open a trading post next year at Russian Mission on the Yukon.

Months ago the word had come through Chak who had seen the mate of the freighter at Dutch Harbor.

Judy's concentration on her problems was suddenly broken. From the corral on the ridge behind Crag-eagles, Ilak began to howl. Long and tingling the sound of his howling came down the valleys, multiplied a thousandfold by echoing crags.

As she listened, startled, to that repeated wailing sound, Judy could in imagination hear just what Tigil would now be saying to herself:

"Ilak lonesome. Old dog lonesome," she would say. "Mebbe Yukon dog he hear Ilak now. Yukon dog he answer. Big howl through the air. Mebbe all dogs everywhere hear. Long way no matter. Them dogs all same hear."

Judy shivered. Again Ilak howled and howled in rising tremolo of wailings:

"Whooeee! Whooeeee! Whooeeee!"

Judy, listening, faced about abruptly in the trail. She looked toward the Gates, but only a world of fogs was there.

Could it be that some boat was coming in through the Gates right now?

Years ago when Ilak had been just a little yearling dog Kay or some other seafaring man had often brought power boat or sailing boat in through the Pass. And hours before sight or sound of boat had come to Chaf or Tigil or Judy, Ilak would strike up just such a howling as this!

Now Ilak was stone deaf. How *could* he know? Telepathy? A magic wireless? Anyway, Ilak knew! He had always known before. He *must* know now!

Kay was coming home. Perhaps this very afternoon he was outside the Gates with his boat under sea anchor, waiting to make the passage.

For what seemed to her hours, Judy waited down by the old wharves. A salt breeze, stiff with the sea, stung her cheeks. Her feet were cold as ice. Her hands were cold, too. In order to keep warm she began to run with short steps in a little dog-trot along the border of the Waddies.

Through the fogs she caught a glimpse of a flock of Hutchins geese walking along in groups of six or seven. A few were standing by the banks of a stream preening their feathers. Their heads were held high. They craned their necks at Judy and, magnified by the fog, looked to her like queer creatures of another world.

Should she try a shot at them? She drew her bolas, a kind of sling-shot, from her pocket. Then on sudden impulse she put it back. She was too tired to do another useful or profitable thing this afternoon, and she wouldn't take a goose even if one should waddle up and *ask* to be taken!

"Kay is here! He isn't here. He'll never come again! He is here! He isn't!"

That was the rhythm to which Judy climbed the hill again to Crageagles.

She was too tired to eat any supper. She would have a cool drink of water and eat some of the strawberries Tigil had gathered that afternoon.

She opened the door to the kitchen cabin and made her way to the table. She found the bowl of stemmed berries with a cup of sugar and two spoons and a plate of dark bread beside it. On the back of the range in an open pan of hot water was a silver pitcher filled with a hot spiced drink. Tigil had made this special Crageagles beverage from wild fruits—strawberries and dried salmonberries and the hips of the dwarf crimson bramble, *rubus arcticus,* whose fruits Judy gathered in season and dried for this special use.

After refreshing herself with the food and drink Judy made her way by the outer path to her own rooms. She was very tired. She would go to bed at once.

When she entered the living room she turned about and for the first time since she could remember she shot the great iron bolts on the door.

Out in his cave under the cliffs Ilak once more set up his howling.

The girl undressed slowly, pulled on over her head her dimity nightgown, flung the red robe about her shoulders, and standing on her tiptoes to reach the candle that Tigil, as usual, had lighted and placed on the stone shelf above the fireplace, she blew out the flame.

In a moment she was kneeling by her bed on the wolf

rug and was saying the prayer that Kay and Judy had said every night for years, together.

Judy couldn't have told whether Kay was a pagan or a man of faith in some "religion." But once Kay had told her that if she said this prayer every night as long as she lived, and lived it "as long as she prayed," she couldn't get far off the trail. Kay's travelogue had stopped there.

Now Judy said the words aloud, very distinctly, for she loved them:

"God be in my heart and in my understanding.
God be in my eyes and in my looking.
God be in my mouth and in my speaking.
God be in my heart and in my thinking.
God be at mine end and at my departing."

She rose to her feet and stood in her trailing old nightgown with her curls tumbling about her head in the half light from the windows like a shadowy girl in a dream.

Then she climbed into bed, stretched out with a sigh of weariness, drew the blankets up about her chin, and fell asleep.

The last bleak lights of gray evening were dying away on the harbor when, three quarters of an hour later, Judy sat up again in bed, startled.

Springing from her warm nest among the blankets, she caught up her dressing gown and sped across the living room to fling open the inside blinds of the windows and draw back the curtains.

Far out between the Whale Gates a light shone bright. She thought she heard the echo of a faint *halloo!*

There was a boat outside the Whale Gates. No mistake about that! Out there in the calm waters of the semicircular lagoon some craft of the sea was lying at her anchors!

"Kay! Oh! It *is* Kay!" she whispered, and clasped her hands together and drew a long, deep breath of joy. She felt as if her throat were too tight for breathing after that first deep sigh. Kay had come home! Kay was here!

His boat at anchor, he would wait out there till morning.

Suddenly a great fear overwhelmed her.

"Oh, no!" she whispered, putting the fear away.

"Kay would never be mad enough to try the Pass to-night!"

Kay knew the risks. But Kay knew, too, how easy the passage always was when the wind sat right. "To-night she's right!" Kay might be saying this very minute to himself. "We'll make it!"

And then while tears welled up in her eyes, tears of happiness and of excitement, too, another fear came to torment her.

She did not move for a moment, but her hands shook when at length she rested them flat on the sill and peered through the windows again.

She covered her face with her hands and tried to think—*think* what she should do! What she *must* do!

Perhaps the boat out there belonged to the poachers! Suppose Orca Pougher had come to Kala!

She shook like a willow leaf in a tempest. She still had her face in her hands, trying to see *through, through!*

But she could not see.

She turned away from the windows slowly, her hands and arms falling limply by her sides.

When you couldn't see through, when you didn't know what to do, you just had to do the thing that you *must* do!

How utterly stupid it would be for her to light the beacon fires on Kala to draw the poachers into the harbor.

The minutes crawled by and still Judy stood still in the middle of the low living room, trying to think it out.

Good Heavens! Well, right or wrong, foolish or wise as she might be, she must run the risks.

Now with the speed of a little whirlwind of dust on a summer highway she flung about and was off for her bedroom. She threw open the door of her wardrobe closet. In the dark she put her hands on the green wool skirt and the green shirt and the wool hose and the skin boots and the neatly piled undergarments that she had worn all day. She had no time to hunt for fresh garments in the dark.

Without even stopping to light the kerosene lamp on the table in her bedroom, she flung on her clothes and thrust her arms into the sleeves of her green wool sweater, jerking the wrap down about her body with

her right hand while with her left she felt about in the dark for her electric torch in the top drawer of the dresser.

She dashed into the living room and her fingers were steady as she took a few matches from the carved container of walrus ivory on the mantel above the fireplace. She stooped down and dug away in an Aleut clam basket of woven grasses to find some wads of dried sphagnum moss which the islanders always used in kindling fires. The wads of moss she stuffed into the pockets of her green sweater.

She lighted a candle and set it on a little table which she dragged from a corner and placed behind the windows in line with the Pass.

She made for the door, flung it wide open, and stood for a second of waiting as the outer darkness came leaping into her face with the speed and the intensity of light.

Off down the trail then, where moonlight laid the footpath thick with silver! The light caught silver trickles of water seeping down from the bank above. Were the skies over the harbor just a sieve of stars?

Within three minutes of rapid, sure descent, Judy reached the shelf of rock that jutted out in a platform about twenty feet above the valley floor and sea level.

The platform, perhaps ten feet square, made a natural roof for the warm sulphur springs that poured out from the ground beneath. The white islanders utilized the springs as a bath, and Kay had long ago enclosed the spot in drift-timbers chinked with clay.

The top of the Sulphur Rock, as they called the

platform, had been used by the islanders for years as the site of their beacon fires—not for mariners at sea, but for the islanders making their landfall outside the Gates or heading down through the Pass into the harbor of Kala. By the use of finder and azimuth Kay had established the fact that Sulphur Rock was true west in direct line with a median east-west line through the Whale Gates. A beacon fire on Sulphur Rock could therefore be seen plainly by any boat that was making in through the Whale Gates.

As Judy worked, fetching wood for the beacon fire, hauling chunks of drift from a pile at the west of Sulphur Rock, the fogs began to come down again from the heights. Now moon and stars were overcast and yet a kind of luminous glow remained to lighten the darkness.

Judy stood twisting skeins of sphagnum mosses and tucking the twisted skeins into the interstices of the driftwood pile which she had built on the platform. She ran down the trail, then around into the lee of the rock on the level ground. She drew a match from her pocket, dropped down on one knee, scratched the match on a stone, and protected the flame from the wind by crouching down in the lee of the bathhouse. The little flame flared out.

A moment later, Judy ran up the trail again. In her right hand she was carrying a torch made from lighted wisps of the moss that twisted and tore with the wind about a long smooth round stick. With this torch flaming like a spindle from a loom of fire, Judy moved about the cairn of driftwood on the platform, and here and

there she touched the skeins of moss in the cairn with the burning tip of the torch. The cairn roared up high in flames. Wood smoke rose dark above the pitchy flames of the beacon fire on Kala, and sky and clouds swallowed up the smoke.

Bats in hordes, attracted by the light, came swooping down from the caves. They wheeled and squeaked and made off again into the night.

The surge of the seas came drawing down through the Whale Gates.

And early the next morning when Judy flung out of bed and raced barefooted in her nightgown to the east windows to have, as she hoped, her first glimpse of Kay's power boat out there, she could see a strange craft riding at her anchor out in the harbor of Kala!

CHAPTER IV

THE "APHOON"

ON AN afternoon just seven days before Judy Ivanoff had lighted the beacon fire on Kala, Irene Robson had been giving a tea party on board the *Aphoon,* her father's glorious new seventy-two-foot cruiser. The boat, named for the north, or Aphoon, mouth of the Yukon River, had been bought recently for Dr. Robson by the Metropolitan National Bank of Seattle. Two weeks before, the agents of the company had delivered the cruiser at the boat-landing of Tundra Towers, the Robsons' famous old log dwelling three miles up the Yukon, across the bar of the Bering Sea.

To-morrow the *Aphoon* was to hoist anchors and begin her cruise down across the Bering Sea and the North Pacific from Nome to Seattle. She had been scheduled to leave at seven this evening, but her young skipper, Phil Wayne, had found that some changes must still be made in his clearance papers. Now Phil was lounging against the rail waiting to take the last three guests ashore in the boat's dinghy. By four o'clock most of the visitors had already departed by motor boats and launches and even an old dory or two, and the jolliest group had left, as they had arrived, by a clumsy freight-lighter. The three remaining guests still lin-

gered in the gay chairs in the commodious afterdeck where the windshields and the permanent roof and the side-curtains protected them from a pretty stiff off-shore breeze.

Dr. Robson, Irene's father, owner of the boat, in tweeds and an English cap, leaned meditatively on the rail, talking in low tones to Judge Hilary Coles, his friend for decades past here in the North. Judge Coles sat by the rail, his slender hands with their prominent blue veins busy with a polished mooring bitt, round which he kept winding and unwinding a silver and gold ribbon from a box of chocolates on a table near by.

Irene Robson herself, tall and eager and gray-eyed, her short ash-blonde hair flying in the wind, was trying hard to be dutiful and interested as she chatted with Mrs. Coles, or rather, as Phil, observing, put it, "let Mrs. Coles talk her deaf!"

Now Mrs. Coles fixed her black eyes on Irene's gray eyes and shouted out in astonishing loud tones that made Irene jump inwardly, "If your mother were living, Irene, I really don't know what she would think about your father's plan! Taking four such lively young people on such a long tour!"

Mrs. Coles reached out her plump right hand to stroke Irene's slender brown hand with its tapering fingers.

Irene flushed slightly.

"I can't see why——" she began. Then suddenly she was still again, for Mrs. Coles had continued:

"These young Asches, now! Am I to understand that their surname is really *Romanaschoff*, my dear?"

Irene nodded with her quick smile. It was silly to be cross with Mrs. Coles!

"Their uncle was that wealthy recluse, Michael Romanaschoff? Brother and sister certainly resemble each other vastly. Typical Russians, aren't they? With that aloof air and their manners—so refined that you'd hardly notice they were manners!"

Irene stared at her companion. How the woman did go on! She was going on again now. "And they were with you all last winter at Tundra Towers? They helped you gather all the gold pieces that your foolish, erratic old grandfather left down at his trading post near Kuslvak when he died suddenly?"

Again Irene nodded. And then, pitying the incorrigible drive that sent Mrs. Coles prying into affairs, and at the same time realizing the sincerity of Mrs. Coles' interest in the doings of "dear Marcia Robson's little girl," Irene gracefully took Mrs. Coles into the dining saloon for another cup of tea. For the third time, too, since last evening, when the members of the cruise had dined ashore with Judge and Mrs. Coles, the young girl told her companion about the "Asches" and Phil Wayne, skipper of the *Aphoon.*

Of course neither Phil Wayne nor the young Romanaschoffs were tourists. All three had lived for a long time in Alaska. Last winter a series of strange misadventures had brought the three to Tundra Towers, where for months Dr. Robson and Irene had been their hosts.

The cruise on which they were now embarking? On which, in fact, they had already embarked? Why on

earth *shouldn't* they go cruising together? Mrs. Coles couldn't think of any better guardians than Irene's own daddy and dear Miss Linda Tanzy, formerly teacher in the government school at Colshak but for years past Irene's beloved companion—could she now? Pleased at having her judgment deferred to so graciously, Mrs. Coles promptly *couldn't!*

The itinerary of the *Aphoon?*

"Oh, we were never so excited in our lives!" Irene's gray eyes grew wide with genuine fervor. "Of course we're going straight to Seattle first, by way of the regular route, Unimak and Unalaska and Dutch Harbor, Seward and Juneau and Ketchikan!"

"That glorious Inside Passage!" exclaimed Mrs. Coles breathlessly. She had eaten too many little cakes and wafers to have much extra wind for enthusiasm, but such as she had she gave! "I almost wish I were going with you! We go 'outside' every three years, of course! Next year's our year. I need some new crochet patterns and some new linens and a few extra pair of the Trippers' Shoes that I can't get anywhere except in that special shop off Second Avenue in Seattle. And where do you go from there, dear?" Mrs. Coles helped herself to another chocolate.

"Oh, we're going 'way around and up through the Panama Canal and then farther still through the inland passage from Florida, north."

For the third time Mrs. Coles fixed the facts in her mind.

At Bucksport, Maine, the cruiser was to be overhauled. Here, too, Phil and Boris would leave the

party and go off to school. Billy Baxter was to stay with the boat. Dr. Robson would hire a new skipper and a crew. Then, Miss Tanzy and Irene's father, Jeyna and Irene, and two tutors for mental ballast, would spend the winter cruising in southern waters. Next June, they would pick up the boys in New York and come back home—to Alaska—for another winter at Tundra Towers.

"Perhaps! Perhaps!" heavily Mrs. Coles agreed. To judge from her tone, Mrs. Coles could see much farther into the arcana of the future—a lot farther—than this lovely little ash-blonde, Irene Robson, "dear Marcia Robson's motherless girl!" Observing the girl's radiant loveliness, Mrs. Coles found it hard to credit the report that this young slip of a thing was a dynamo of energy when it came to driving a team of malamutes and mushing after a sled, or managing a house, or doing any other of the extraordinary and yet everyday things that she had always done down there at Tundra Towers and Colshak on the Yukon.

"Here are the runaways!" a merry voice rang out.

They turned to see Jeyna Asche at the door of the saloon. At Jeyna's side stood young Dr. Wade Gale, the airman physician of "Nome and the Tundra," as the newspapers had it "outside" in the "States," whither, long since, Dr. Gale's fame had spread.

Dr. Gale was bending over Jeyna's shoulder now, speaking to her in low tones. All the afternoon Dr. Gale had devoted himself to this exotic young Russian girl, and Irene couldn't wonder at his devotion.

Jeyna was such a lovely picture with her dark eyes

and her almost severely dressed dark hair, her high cheek bones and that exquisite clear pallor—"like silver on pearl," thought Irene. Jeyna's cruising clothes were so just right, too! And bought right here at Nome! No, not really at Nome, but sent up to Nome by airplane delivery from a great Seattle shop!

Jeyna was wearing a plaited skirt of brown tweed and a cream-colored silk shirt edged with brown. She had a red silk handkerchief for a tie at the deep V open at the throat. Over the blouse she wore a cardigan of brown rough weave. Her red chamois jacket hung over Dr. Gale's arm.

From the loneliest reindeer camp in the hills back of Nulato or Pilot Station, or Anvik or Andreafski, to the mining camps in the hills back of Ruby and Marshall and Fortuna Ledge, from Nome and Golofnin Bay to the most remote and squalid of the Eskimo villages down on the Lower Yukon, where there were no government schools—to all men in places like these this airman flew in his famous plane, *Bird of the Yukon,* which was, report had it, equipped with pontoons and skiis so that the *Bird of the Yukon* shunned neither open arm of the sea nor glare ice of the Yukon nor the vast levels of the tundra barrens.

At the sight of Jeyna and her companion a little twinge of pain seized Irene.

"He will be taking Jeyna away from me!" she thought. She wondered what Phil and Boris would say to *that!* To have the Tundra Towers "foursome" broken up like that!

Irene left Mrs. Coles to the somewhat merciless

mercies of Jeyna, and making her excuses to the matron of the stentorian voice she hurried out to the after-deck to perch on the rail by her father's side.

Lounging in the deep chairs, Phil Wayne, the Russian adventurer scientist, fisherman, and seaman, Peter Karazoff, and the young Boris Asche were discussing, evidently, the merits of the *Aphoon.*

Karazoff, it appeared, had been signed on by Phil as extra seaman on the boat for the trip from Nome to Dutch Harbor, where he was to leave the cruiser, having first secured a good man whom he knew to take his place on the boat. From St. Michael on Norton Sound Phil had sent a wireless to Judge Coles. He had asked this old friend of Dr. Robson's to hire an extra man for the first leg of the cruise. Luck for Phil to get a veteran like this Peter Karazoff!

Now snatches of Phil's eager phrases came drifting across the deck to Irene:

"Yes, of course! Keel, stem, and stern of oak. The frames are doubly sawn and closely spaced, then planked over with rift sawn yellow pine."

Irene smiled to herself.

How Phil Wayne did love a good boat! Generously Phil had agreed to have his own off-shore cruiser, the *Silver Spar,* hauled up for dry storage at the private Talbert yards at Nome. How many regrets good old Phil must have had, giving up his own boat for a year or more in order that he might skipper the *Aphoon* on her cruise!

Now Phil and his two companions were standing up. Perhaps they'd go into the dining saloon and rescue

Jeyna and the doctor from the indefatigable Mrs. Coles! But no! The three strolled by, and Phil, with a smile and a "Great party!" for Irene went on with his exposition of the merits of the new cruiser.

"You can see," said Captain Phil, with a movement of his right hand in the direction of the superstructure, "right here there's a lot of improvement over the old way. The deck dining saloon, now, one step down from the main deck, means that the pilot house, located well forward, has windows all round, even in the after-end. That arrangement gives the fellow in the pilot house a view astern, too. A great help in a crowded harbor!"

"And speed!" chimed in Boris in response, probably to Karazoff's low voiced comment: "Boy! I'll say *speed!* Fifteen knots, isn't it, Phil?"

"The two 100 h. p. heavy duty Winton gasoline engines give her a speed of fifteen and one-half knots," explained Phil in his exact, thoughtful tones. "That ought to take us down to Dutch Harbor in pretty good time, what? Besides, the vessel's rigged with the two masts, you see. If we get into a tight place, which we don't of course anticipate, we can depend on the foremast and the mizzen to take us out flying!"

Now the boys would show Karazoff the switchboard with its fascinating dials and figures and its finger-tip, one-man control, the auxiliary water pumps, the air tanks, the roomy cabins, and all the rest! Irene thought she'd like to go with them. Then she thought she'd rather just stay here kicking her heels happily and observing Aunt Linda over in her chair on the starboard side of the afterdeck, getting ready to darn the pair

of long gray wool hose which she had just dug up from her basket of woven tundra grass and spruce roots.

A little later, Irene and Aunt Linda, Jeyna and Dr. Robson had stampeded to the rail, where they were bidding good-bye to the last contingent of guests.

Down in the stern of the dinghy Dr. Gale was already standing with folded arms—long-limbed, clear-eyed, and handsome—his glance seeking out Jeyna from the excited group leaning on the rail of the cruiser above him.

And then, just as the dinghy was ready to put out, Judge Coles recalled a warning he had intended to give his friend, Dr. Robson. He sprang up from his seat in the dinghy and cautiously made his way over to the stern, holding fast to the sides of the boat as he went.

He hollowed his hands about his mouth as if his shouts were to come from a great distance away.

"I say, Robson, ahoy!"

Dr. Robson smiled in enjoyment of the picture made by the departing Judge. The owner of the *Aphoon* leaned far out over the rail and waved his hand in signal that he had heard.

"You remember that rascal Pougher, Orca Pougher?" The Judge's voice came caroming up like a water ball. "I—saw—him—last—night—at—the—Lomen—drug store. He had an ugly little rascal with him from down your way—Colshak! Or perhaps Russian Mission! They—were—talking—to—your—mate—Billy! Up—to mischief—I'll be bound! Look out for 'em!"

The dinghy got away at last!

"And for that advice about Billy, Phil must feel like chucking Judge Coles headfirst over the boat side!" whispered Irene to Miss Tanzy. "The idea of his saying that Billy was up to some mischief with that Orca Pougher person! Why, that infamous Pougher has about as much chance to stir up trouble for us with Billy as I have to—to pilot the *Bird of the Yukon!*"

Irene waved a last good-bye to the folks in the dinghy. Then she strolled away aft to talk to Karazoff, who had a box out from a built-in locker under the companion stairs and was taking from it one by one and sorting out the Code P T and Q signals.

Irene was glad that Karazoff was going with them as far south as Dutch Harbor. Perhaps from him she could learn a lot of interesting things about the Aleutian Islands, at some of whose remote ports she had stopped occasionally on her way to and from school, voyaging north or south on the *Victoria.*

Karazoff interested Irene. She thought that she was going to admire him a lot and like him, too. He was so tall and lank in build, almost the old-fashioned American backwoodsman type of the *Leatherstocking Tales!* His cheeks were so weathered and wrinkled and brown! Under his shaggy brows his eyes, adventurer's gray in color, were in their candor childlike and yet so wholly unreadable! A complex personality, Peter Karazoff!

Last evening, after the *Aphoon's* anchors had plunged into the then quiet waters of the roadstead here and the members of the cruise, having sped ashore, had been

entertained at dinner by the Coles family, Judge Coles had told his friends all about this new seaman.

Peter Karazoff's father, it appeared, had been a native Russian. He had spent long and turbulent years in the consular service in China and had married a Russian girl of noble family then living in Vladivostok.

Peter himself had never married. As a young man he had lived dangerously all over the world. He had hunted tigers in Pamir, and had traded in the South Sea Islands and Hawaii. He had sought the Antarctic and had sailed for South Georgia once on a windjammer and had had the boat crack up under him off the coast of New Zealand. He had hunted plants in Tibet and Scechuan and Mongolia for the agricultural department of the Federal Government, and had been manager and owner of the Kala Bay Cod Fishing Company down in the Aleutians. In 1916, in connection with his fishing business, he had bought some freighters and a dandy new 5,000-ton cargo carrier, the *Cossack*.

From 1912 he had had with him as guests down on Kala Island a nephew and his wife and little daughter—the Ivanoffs. The nephew, also a native Russian, had lost everything in the War years. No, he hadn't seen active service. Judge Coles had heard that the young fellow had had some kind of trouble with his eyes—the after-effects of snowblindness.

Finally the nephew had gone to work for Karazoff. Down on Kala he ran the fish yard, outfitted the vessels, hired the captains and the crews, packed and re-packed cod and salmon, and bought and sold from the Sea of Okhotsk to San Francisco. And in addition to his cargo

and passenger coasting service, the young man Ivanoff was reported to have engaged in a more private enterprise of somewhat devious character. To come right out and *say* it, young Ivanoff was reported to have made a lot of money through smuggling operations, bringing into the United States through the Pacific ports gems and works of art that had belonged to his powerful relatives and friends in the glorious days of the Czar.

So for a while things had gone. Karazoff made some money and his nephew made a great deal of money.

Then suddenly word came to Nome that the young nephew and his wife, homeward bound for Nome after the purchase here of two new schooners, had been drowned in the shipwreck off Kala reefs of the new 5,000-ton cruiser, the *Cossack.*

Almost at once Karazoff disposed of his boats and shut down the fishing station, influenced in his decision by an eruption of the Kala volcanoes or perhaps an earthquake (the island being so remote, they never could get the right of it up here) that had deposited a thousand tons of basalt rock in the pass of the Whale Gates two or three nights after the loss of Karazoff's best boat and the death of Karazoff's relatives in the shipwreck of the *Cossack.*

Since that time, the adventurer and promoter had, indeed, hardly visited Nome except for an annual voyage thither each spring. Late in the month of May or early in June when the Nome liner, the *Victoria,* came plowing north through the drifting ice floes of the Bering Sea, Judge Coles would see the man. Karazoff

would always be standing by himself in one of the boat-loads of passengers relayed in to shore by the small craft or the great lighters from the steamer at anchor in the roadstead. That same evening the Judge might seek him out as he wandered about, lonely and apart, among the groups that gathered to celebrate the arrival of the first spring boat.

Each year he would have changed greatly. His cheeks would be more hollow and beneath his shaggy eyebrows his eyes would look larger. As if, said the Judge, the man were trying to see what it was all about—this Life that had played such tricks on a born wanderer!

Life had tied him down, sure enough! Condemned him, finally, to the living out of the best score of his best years in one place, remote from the comforts and conveniences of civilization. Not that Peter Karazoff had ever cared for the comforts! But, you must grant that, footloose and given, too, reasonable transportation facilities—say, a Bactrian camel or a dog-sled and a good string of dogs, a reindeer sledge or a jinrikisha, kayak or outboard canoe, airplane or Ford or railroad train, Karazoff could at least come back when he wanted to come!

By this time, certainly, the man must have lost all adaptability to a changing world. Better for him to stay down there on Kala! Here the Judge smiled, somehow implying that he himself might sojourn in one spot or another of God's earth and still, like Emerson's wise man, find himself everywhere at *Home!*

Driven into exile in America by the loss of property and prestige and by danger of bodily harm in Moscow,

compelled after a while to earn their own livelihood by what was to them presumably gruelling toil, convinced that the world was against them, and definitely on their own account at war with the world, the young Ivanoffs, it appeared, had inveigled their old cousin Peter into making them a fantastic promise. Under the terms of the promise, Karazoff agreed that in case he survived the young couple, he would rear their daughter to young womanhood down there on remote and lonely Kala. Here at least she would for a time be far from the cheating and the injustice and inequalities of a world gone mad.

"You can imagine my surprise, then," Judge Coles had warmed to his peroration, "when the other day Peter Karazoff walked into my office and inside of three minutes had me working faster than those electric dredges out there in the river!"

The Judge's hand gestured while his genial voice went on:

"Had me drawing up papers certifying to the birth of the Ivanoffs' little girl here in the Nome hospital while the parents were on their way to visit old Karazoff at Kala. Proof of the child's birth was available, of course. That matter settled, I must draw up a will that gives all Karazoff's property to the Ivanoff girl, in the event of the old man's death. After that, to my astonishment, I learned that Karazoff has struck . . ." What Karazoff had struck they were not to be informed.

Mrs. Coles's stentorian tones interrupted the speaker.

"Hilary Coles, I am ashamed of you!"

The words came booming out from the "den" where in an armchair under a wall "chromo" draped in fishing seines and strings of Job's pearls, Mrs. Coles sat rocking back and forth, her hands on the arms of her chair, her eyes on space.

"Don't you say another word about Peter Karazoff and his will!" went on the reprimand. "I must say you have grown to be the worst gossip on Seward peninsula, outside the Eskimo villages!"

Judge Coles put his right forefinger in his right ear and vibrated that ear. He put his left forefinger in his left ear and vibrated that ear, too.

Like the driver of a stalled motor who knows that he has stopped but can't figure out the reason *why,* the confused Judge tried to think it out.

"Let me see! Where was I?" he queried. "Yes, oh, yes, as I was saying, the girl's name is *Judith,* Judith Ivanoff—that's it!"

CHAPTER V

OFF SOUNDINGS

THREE days ago at noon, later than the skipper had planned, the *Aphoon* had left far astern Nome, that cup-of-gold, in her jade green saucer of tundra. Green and white under the light blue northern skies, the waters of the Bering Sea raked past the deck rails in vast mare's tails of cloudy green. At last the cruiser was on her way!

At six o'clock this morning, four bells in the morning watch, Phil sprang out of his berth in his stateroom just aft of the engine bulkhead. For two hours now he would be free for the job of chart work that he had last night mapped out for himself.

He snatched up his camel's-hair bathrobe and wrapped it about him, put on his slippers and dashed off for the shower bath this side the galley.

Ten minutes later, with his charts handy and sailing directions spread out before him on the table of the tiny chartroom, he settled himself to the task of studying those maps of the Bering Sea, giving himself to the work with all the enthusiasm of the young mariner who goes down to the sea in a ship which he skippers himself.

Suddenly Phil sat up with a jerk. He arose hurriedly

from his chair. With his head thrust forward a little, he crouched over and pressed both hands hard against the table. He listened intently once more. Then he brushed his forehead with his right hand.

"My great aunt!" he exclaimed, confused and uneasy. He gave a short laugh on a quick, deep breath.

Was he hearing the sound of breakers pounding on reefs?

"What's got into me this morning? I'm wobbly!" he thought. "We're exactly where we planned last night that we'd be this morning, aren't we? The engines just ticking over, after a night under sea anchor in the lee of Unimak? Why, we're really not off soundings yet! Reefs? With the shore here as sheer as Gibraltar? Billy and I have brought boats down this way three years running! Reefs?"

And again he whispered, "Impossible!"

But—was anything impossible at sea?

"Where there is howling," say the Russians, "there are wolves."

Where there are surfs there must be shoals!

Now thoroughly awake to the possibility of unforeseen disaster, Phil sprang to the door of the little chartroom, wrenched it open, and in a second was up the companion stairs and at the port rail.

He listened a moment.

Right-o! The engines were just ticking over; that was all.

A swift glance through the windows at the aft end of the pilot house showed Phil that the wheel house was empty. Boris was not at the wheel!

"She's moving right along, though!"

Phil's glance sped aloft. The auxiliary sails were up! Phil gave a great shout of anger and surprise. He dashed into the wheel house. Yes, the wheel was lashed! His eyes hadn't deceived him!

For how long had the cruiser been sailing herself with her wheel lashed and her sails up? Could you beat that?

Into the pilot house again. The skipper rang for Billy Baxter, but Billy did not answer. Down the stairs ran Phil, and as he hurried on, a feeling of loneliness and utter solitude settled down upon him.

What was up? Where were they heading?

Out in the open sea a lashed wheel might not spell disaster. In deep water, off soundings, a boat might sail herself. But here . . .

Phil found Billy, the Eskimo mate, wrapped in a heavy blanket on his cot down in the engine room, relaxed and snoring loudly in his sleep. Phil seized the mate by the shoulders and shook him and raged at him until Billy roused up. Dazed and bewildered, he scrambled at length to his feet, and was off in the wake of Phil.

Soon the two had the sails furled and the wheel unlashed, and were swinging about from under the lee of some small island, heading out to sea.

Leaving Billy for a moment at the wheel, Skipper Phil Wayne went out on deck. His eyes were on that receding island. The seascape here was typically Aleutian—an island like an enchanted green pavilion swinging into sight and out of sight again on a vast rolling

sea. But the seascape did not in the least resemble Unimak Island and the Unimak Pass. Phil ought to know the Pass pretty well by this time. Hadn't he brought boats down and back three times already?

Slowly the *Aphoon* was forging ahead.

And suddenly, in the murk and mists of early morning, Phil made out the emergence of another headland, all green and moss-covered from shores to towering summit. Below the green heights of the island, long low green hills curved southward in diminishing reaches of fog-drenched cliffs. Suddenly the sun shone out. And now, like Gargantuan swimmers, headland after headland stood up and flung off the fogs as if shedding garments into the sea.

Suddenly, too, Phil became aware that a long slow ground swell was overhauling the *Aphoon*. The surface of the water, hitherto almost smooth, was being ribbed into long surges of blue. And still the cruiser hurried on, taking the lengthening waves with the skill of a trained swimmer.

Phil went into the wheel house in a hurry and sent Billy down to the engine room, at the same time advising him to slow down the engines still more. Then Phil swung the cruiser out sharp from under the lee of the headlands.

For a moment or two the *Aphoon* rocked in the trough of the billows. Her bows scooped under the water and out again. She dug her nose into the long, smooth rollers, heading, as Phil thought, due west, straight for Kamchatka!

Where was Boris? Where was Jeyna? Usually the

two were early on deck. If they'd only come! Phil would turn the wheel over to one or the other and would hustle down to have it out with old Karazoff, who—no doubt about it—had steered the cruiser into this mess!

His head down, Phil peered through the windows of the wheel house.

Then, leaving the wheel for a moment, he dashed out and stood on the starboard deck with both hands on the polished rail, looking out in bewilderment across the waters.

"I'd certainly like to figure it all out before I go down and give old Karazoff the dickens for steering us down in the night straight into the middle of nowhere," thought Phil. "Old fellow probably got sleepy and went down to hole in for a good snooze. They say the Gloucester fishermen sometimes lash their wheels and get away with it, but, whew! Seeing those sails all set and the wheel lashed tight certainly gave me a start for a while!"

As Phil stood thus, his head outlined against the morning sky, his right arm hooked carelessly now in the lifeline of the rail to windward, he looked like a worried young Viking. His red hair, tousled by the wind, curled up all over his well-shaped head. His arched nose, with its deep cut nostrils, his determined chin, his deep-set gray eyes, steady and alert as an airman's—all gave his face a serious expression. Besides, just now he was feeling awfully cross and most awfully bewildered.

"As a rule," he thought, "the waters of the Bering

Sea are green. These waters are blue. That ought to mean that we're already down through the Pass into the North Pacific. And we can't possibly be there! Not in three days from Nome!"

With a sinking sensation in his stomach Phil decided that there was nothing he'd dislike more than to ring for Billy and acknowledge that the captain of the *Aphoon* had lost his bearings.

"I'll have to think it out!" he kept repeating to himself. "I'll have to think it out!"

As he hurried again into the wheel house a bird came flying abeam in long sailing flight. For thirty yards or more on even keel the ocean farer soared with black pinions motionless. A creature of exquisite lines, the bird was keeping pace alongside the *Aphoon*. It was the goony, or black albatross, a bird never to be found in any of the inclosed seas bordering the North Pacific. For the black albatross is a bird of the open seas. Thirteen, fourteen, fifteen—twenty nautical miles from land and farther that bird will follow your ship. But let your craft, seeking her landfall, once approach the off-shore, twelve-mile limit, and the black albatross will abandon his tailing flight. He is off then. "Away in the blue mist, off and gone in the blue haze!"

That black albatross settled one question for Skipper Phil just as, hours since, on this same morning a 'longshore whale had, temporarily at least, settled a question for Judith Ivanoff on Kala.

Now Phil knew that the *Aphoon* wasn't in the waters of the Bering Sea at all! Instead, she was already sailing down the North Pacific. Exactly where, exactly why,

and exactly how, Phil couldn't for the life of him figure out!

He rang again for Billy. An instant later the mate appeared in the wheel house and Phil, standing with his hands on the wheel, looked at his old friend as if half fearful that even Billy's well-known Eskimo features might have suffered a sea change!

"Billy, old man!" cried Phil. "We're lost! Can you beat that?"

Billy shook his head in unbelief, and Phil, noting, went on more hopefully, "Now where do you figure that Unimak ought to be?"

Billy frowned. He waved his hand in the direction of the shadowy cliffs off there in the wake of the cruiser.

As Phil swung about to follow through the windows in the aft end of the wheel house the direction indicated by Billy, he thought that he caught again the sound of that surf booming on distant shoals.

And then for a crowded three minutes while the boat was moving on, heading down into the open sea, there were swift conjecture and surmise and earnest talk between skipper and mate of reefs and shoals.

From the shoals of Sitkaladik to the reefs of Nagai, from dangerous shoals off Sandman Reefs to the northwest, presumably between Sannak and the Shumagin Cod Banks, the young mariners argued reefs and wrecks and rocks. And still the skipper, with the feeling that everything was reeling into nothingness and that the top of his head was surely slipping off, kept saying to Billy:

"Man alive, though, we ought to be on the wrong side of the Alaskan peninsula for Nagai and Hagemeister and Sandman Reefs! It's beyond me, entirely. I can't make it out!"

Straddle-legged on the deck stood Billy, shrugging his broad shoulders that topped a thick, strong body above lean flanks and slender legs.

All typical Eskimo was this twenty-two-year-old native. From generations of kayaker ancestors Billy had inherited that splendid physique: from seal hunters and walrus hunters and whale hunters, who had crowded their diminishing legs into the cockpits of their skin boats—their kayaks and bidarkas—meanwhile developing free arms and shoulders through the hurling of their seal and walrus spears and their whale harpoons and bird spears, and through the constant paddling of their skin boats to and from the landfall.

All typical Eskimo was Billy, too, in his anxious concern, now that the friend whom he loved and trusted was in distress. True to Eskimo nature, Billy would gladly have shouldered all the burden had he known how to do so.

Not knowing how, Billy only went on frowning at the sea.

"Wind comin', then mebbe rain," said he. "Five, six hours, mebbe. Smell 'em storm."

"You're dead right, you smell 'em storm!" agreed Phil. "They've had a whale of a wind somewhere and perhaps an earthquake. Feel the ground swell. Slow down the engines a little more if you can. Unless we find ourselves pretty quickly, and run into a harbor or

good anchorage, we'll have to ride out the storm in the open, just as the cod-fishing dories and the trawlers have to do on the banks out here."

After a moment, in a changed tone, Phil said, "Find Boris, will you? Ask him to hurry up to stand the wheel for a little while. I'm going to find Karazoff and have it out with the old skeezix. I like his nerve! Lashing the wheel and running up sail! We're so far off course we'd better heave to for hours, if necessary, till we find ourselves."

"First thing you know," thought Phil, as Billy turned away, "the rest of 'em will bob right up into the wheel house and compel us to let them navigate the boat. *Caesar-ka!*" Phil fell back on his favorite expletive, the Russian name for the Emperor Goose. "*Caesar-ka!* I'll bet you Miss Linda Tanzy could have made a better job of it than Kay and I have done, standing watch and watch from Nome, with Boris to spell us the first two days until he twisted his ankle on that lower step into the dining saloon."

Billy, turning back, spread his hands in the gesture of negation customary with the Eskimo. "Me dunno!" said Billy.

The Bering Sea? The Arctic Ocean? The North Pacific? The Yukon, and that sprawling giant, the Kuskokwim? Billy could have given a veteran seaman a run for his money on everything except the Arctic Ocean. But, when it came to the bearings of the *Aphoon,* Billy gave up the job as hopeless.

"What were our soundings last time?" suddenly Phil demanded. At the same time he was thinking, "I'm

going to have a pitched battle with Karazoff over this! But first, I'll tackle my charts and go on with dead reckonings and log books till I can take the sun at noon!"

He heard Billy saying, "No bottom at eighty fathoms! Off soundings, mebbe!"

Phil focused his Zeiss glasses.

"Looks like surfs six or seven miles to the south. There may be a harbor. I know the whalers about here sail full steam ahead straight for the coasts in thick fogs—if this is Tannak or Ongoo—for they can turn their boats in almost one length when they strike kelp."

"*Aphoon,* her turn easy, too," said Billy. " 'N kelp, he reach the surface sometimes in sixty fathoms."

"Well," muttered Phil impatiently, "we've got to find anchorage somewhere. Be sure to call Boris as you go down. Use the sonic depth finder for the soundings. We can get 100 fathoms with that while the boat's moving. Boris must have taken a sleeping powder to keep him in bed as late as this. 'S funny thing, too, for he's usually on deck with the sun."

As Billy started for the stairs on his way to the engine room, he stood for a moment at the companion head, his eyes fixed on the clouds off there on the horizon toward Asia. Then he drew his hand across his forehead and Phil, observing, thought, "I'll bet old Billy feels sort of all in, the way I do! We must have eaten something last night—those cod-tongues, I'll bet a cooky! Too rich, perhaps, for mariners' blood! Anyway, something has made me dog-gone tired, and willing to talk all day rather than tackle my charts again and

then go down and give old Karazoff the dickens for his share in this mix-up!"

Impatiently Phil waited for Boris to come and stead him at the wheel.

"Take it from me, old albatross," he thought bitterly, "we're right where the Zest begins if we've jogged down here from Colshak and the Towers in the Tundra to lose ourselves among the islands of the Aleutian archipelago!

"When the Sunday papers get the story, when they learn for sure that we're carrying in our hold every gold coin that the Robsons dug last spring from their ancestor's treasure-store down there at the Kuslvak trading post, the readers of the Sunday edition will decide that Billy and I have murdered the passengers and bagged the bullion!

"Or," Phil pulled anxiously at the lock of red hair that had fallen down over his right eye, "or perhaps that's just what old Karazoff is planning to do! Gosh all hemlock! I wonder whether that *is* his game!"

"Oh, Skipper Phil, when do we have breakfast?" came a girl's clear voice, and Phil turned to find Jeyna Asche standing by the windward rail outside. Jeyna's dark eyes were alight with mischief. "I hope you're not so downhearted as you look, old thing!"

With a whoop of relief, Phil turned the wheel over to the expert Jeyna's hands. Then without a word of explanation he dashed away for a look at the gas tanks and a reading of the barometer. He found that the glass was falling fast. The clouds in the northwest were

piling up great balls of black and green along the horizon.

"Look what's rolling down on us out of Asia!" muttered Phil, looking at the clouds.

He was in the wheel house again.

Jeyna just turned her head and pulled high about her throat the silver fox collar of her gray tweed coat, when Phil in a strange confusion stood there and covered Jeyna's hand with his own, tanned and brown one.

"Guess Dr. Wade Gale will give me the dickens for getting you into this!" Phil was trying to sound jolly and casual, and all the time he almost wished that he had died in his sleep! "We're miles down below Unimak, Jeyna!" he cried. "And our supply of gasoline is running short already!"

"Phil, what in the world!" Jeyna's level brown eyes looked worriedly into Phil's. "We're off course? Then I'll just wager that old King Tut, old Peter Karazoff, is responsible!"

Characteristically, Phil's shoulders stiffened. "Leave old Kay out of it!" sternly he commanded her. "No one's to blame but me. That's understood from now on." Phil was trying to make his voice cheerful.

For the moment Jeyna felt as if she were old enough to be Phil's mother, though she was hardly more than eighteen herself. She was so sorry for Phil! She was convinced, too, as everyone else must be, that Phil was absolutely helpless and wholly blameless in a situation that had been thrust upon him by Peter Karazoff.

It had been Karazoff's turn to stand the early morning watches. Jeyna knew that. She had heard him talking to Boris about it last evening.

"Don't worry, Phil! We'll come out of this jam all right! I'm going down pretty soon to get breakfast. I'll waken the others, the sleepyheads! Billy was up just now. He said he had found Boris asleep in the afterdeck. Boris is coming to take the wheel while I make the coffee. You go along now. And—Phil," Jeyna laid her hand on Phil's arm and said with sudden earnestness while the light deepened in her dark eyes, "Don't be too hard on queer old Kay! He's an old man now, and I'm sorry for him. With that—that gaunt profile and that terrible yellow color, he makes me sorry for him in spite of everything. I'm sure he's terribly ill. Don't tackle him while you're so angry, Phil, dear!"

"Angry!" shouted Phil. "Two or three days—and most of the supply of gasoline—gone as neatly as a trout gobbles a butterfly! You needn't worry about my being too hard on him, though! It's too late for razzing Karazoff! The mischief's done. We'll heave the boat to while we have breakfast. I'll have to talk things over with Dr. Robson. We're off course by hundreds of miles."

Phil turned and hurried off. He was half stunned.

All those whom he had come to hold dearest were involved in this trouble. He was completely baffled. He *had* to understand. But how could he arrive at understanding?

He thought of the dwindling supply of gasoline and

he said to himself, "I'm tied like a dog. If Karazoff were young I'd fight it out with him. Making a fool of me—perhaps drowning the lot of us! But the man is old. What can a fellow do?

Had Karazoff brought them so far down among the islands simply to expedite his own return to his home? The supposition was absurd. Karazoff was not a poor man. Had he wanted to, he could have hired a special motor ship to bring him down alone. Judge Coles had said that Karazoff had left a power schooner at Dutch Harbor when he sailed from there early in June north to Nome on the *Victoria.*

How had Karazoff managed his conjuring? How *had* he managed it?

Almost dizzy with worry, Phil flung open the door to his stateroom and dropped into his armchair. The hands that covered his face were wet with cold sweat from his forehead. In his ears rang a low, even voice—Karazoff's voice. The time had been three days ago, the day of Irene's party! Three days? More likely five, or six, or seven!

"Of course, if you're reasonably careful you can sail a small boat safely around the world. Slocum did it. And Jack London and his wife, and Thompson, and a score of others. It is the great adventure. In these days you have the advantage of radio. You now, I presume, have your own wireless apparatus? Your own sending set?"

Could Skipper Phil's reply to Karazoff's inquiry about the wireless have been so casual as now in recollection it sounded?

"As a matter of fact, we have no radio apparatus. Dr. Robson is planning to have the newest in radio equipment installed when we tie up for a few days at Seattle. There didn't appear to be much need for wireless on this first lap of the voyage down to Unimak and Dutch Harbor and on through the Inside Passage. We're assured by the radio forecasters good weather for six days. That's enough for us."

Had a look of relief or of triumph flashed across the old man's face?

"I can navigate if anything—er—happens to you," Karazoff had gone on. "I can steer by wind and compass and can box the compass with the best of them."

Curtly Phil had replied, "I always navigate my own boat. We always find harbors, or put her under sea anchor for the night in the safe lee of some island. This trip of ours is a pleasure cruise, you know, and there's no point in urging our speed."

"I always navigate my own boat!"

How old Karazoff must have laughed in his sleeve at that cocksure come-back!

"He has us now just where he planned to get us!" thought Phil, and the thought sent his smoldering temper blazing with white fire.

And oddly enough he thought that he had become quite calm and as cool as a polar bear on an ice floe!

Calm and cool! At last, then, he could go down and have it out with Karazoff!

At one hurdle Phil took the stairs that led down to a dark little passageway. He dove through the dark and arrived in the small foredeck. A blue light from

the sea came streaming in through a porthole. The blue radiance rested on the top of old Karazoff's head and gave the man a blue skull cap. Under the ghostly cap the thin, wrinkled face and the tired old eyes with that odd gleam of youth still in them made Karazoff an overgrown gnome. He sat on the edge of his bunk with one thin leg thrown over the other and he must have been in his pajamas, for afterward Phil recalled them—cut halfway to the knees, showing the thin bony legs and the feet like paddles, ribbed and stringy.

His aged frame bent low over a book that he had propped against one knee, he half turned and looked at Phil and nodded and turned back to his volume again.

A great purple wave went washing by the open porthole window.

Karazoff sprang from his berth, sped across the floor to the window, slammed it to, and dogged it down. He turned and for a moment stared at Phil as if he were seeing him for the first time. Then he stooped down and seized his sextant, which lay on the floor at his feet. He raced past the skipper, stumbled to the foot of the stairs, and all the time kept mumbling to himself,

"Change of watch, is it? Well, it isn't eight o'clock yet, by a long shot! I'll tell you when it's eight!"

Mystified and by now still more deeply worried, Phil turned and followed the old man up the stairs to the deck.

He reached the companion head just in time to hear Karazoff shouting as he leaned far out over the railing and looked toward the red sun that had begun to roll

down the white alleys of the fog as a red painted ball might tear its way down a ten-pin alley.

"See, the sun! The sun is a fire-ship! The devil's ship! The devil's ship! Oh, we'll put all the Robson treasure money from the hold right in the guns and we'll shoot the evil one!" shouted Karazoff.

So saying, he hollowed both hands before his mouth like a conch-shell and yodeled again and again:

"Aieee! Aieee! Aieee!"

The curtain of fogs bore back the shout to the cruiser. Then, swift and agile as a trained athlete, the old mariner leaped the rail of the *Aphoon* and hurled himself into the sea.

"Man overboard!" shouted Phil. "Man overboard!"

For a second Phil stood there, his frame locked in fear and horror.

The next second he was in the pilot house shouting for Jeyna to heave the boat to. He was on deck again. He was at the rail staring down into the water. Staring out. Karazoff was not to be seen. The currents had carried him farther out.

"Oh, Phil, what is it?" Jeyna had cried. One look at Phil's face and Jeyna had no need for his explanation. She knew. Her hands shook a little as they grasped the spokes. And while he was giving Jeyna orders, while he was staring out across the waters, Phil was kicking off his shoes and was stripping off his coat and was shouting to Billy, who had just come up the stairs, that there wouldn't be time to hoist the dinghy from her chocks to the rail and lower her into the sea.

One minute after Karazoff had taken off from the

rail Phil went over the side into the rolling seas. Luckily he'd made fast the end of the line to the windward rail just a little while since. Billy knew what to do.

With long powerful strokes Phil forged outward from the cruiser. The boat began to cut the first arc of her great circle as she turned and began to swing about. Down into the hollows of the long easy rollers the *Aphoon* rode and the ground swell that had for a long time been piling up behind them swept the swimmer away from the side of the boat.

Phil forged on. The cold waters of the North Pacific made all his body numb. The thought came to him that where old Karazoff had drifted, in that direction too he ought to drift. A mountainous green wave toppled and broke and in the foamy wash of her suds carried Phil with her. He battled with the waters. He drifted to leeward. Everywhere, in the smother of spume and mist and waters he sought for Karazoff, but he did not find him anywhere.

The old mariner was gone.

Now Billy took the sounding line from the top of the deck house where it lay in its even coils. With the line over his right arm he swarmed up the side of the pilot house and, standing with his left arm caught about the foremast, he swung the line like a lassoo and sent it hurtling away from him far out over the side.

Phil saw it coming. Borne backward in the trough of a wave, now, he grasped for the line. He missed it, and tried again. This time he caught it.

By now Billy was over the rail and down the accommodation ladder. With one hand clutching the life

line on the windward rail, unconsciously timing every movement to the rhythm of the sea and the cruiser, with steady, slow persistence, Billy began to haul in the line.

By and by it was all over. Phil was back in his quarters changing to dry clothing. He stood for a moment before an open port window. He craned his head this way and that as he stood giving himself the hardest rub-down of his life. He looked out of the window with haggard eyes and strove to catch some glimpse of the departed Karazoff.

Standing so, he thought that he caught a glimpse of a sail. Perhaps there was a fishing dory out there. A great wave struck the cruiser broadside a thundering bang and the boat shivered like a horse in terror. No, it wasn't reasonable to suppose that a fishing dory would be out here in this rising sea with the sky getting more overcast every minute!

After the wave had passed, Phil strained his eyes again in that prolonged view of the waters visible from the window on the starboard side—the side from which Karazoff had made his plunge.

Again that faint gleam, as of a sail! *Could* there be a fishing dory coming up alee?

But it wasn't a fishing dory. Up in the pilot house a moment later he relieved Jeyna at the wheel, meanwhile trying to answer the excited questions of the other members of the cruise, who had been wakened by Phil's shouts of "Man overboard!" Phil rubbed his eyes to get the sea water out of them. A drift log poised on the summit of a wave. With a smothered shout

Phil wrenched the wheel. With a pull he brought the boat up hard. A little later he entered in the *Aphoon's* log the record of the derelict. Then he swallowed a cup of hot coffee that the still sleepy, wholly apologetic Boris brought him.

"Let me take the wheel, old chap!" pleaded Boris. "I'll never forgive myself for having fallen asleep again after Billy first wakened me. I might have helped."

Phil said, "Can't be helped, old man! My wits have been woolly all the morning, too!"

Then, leaving Boris at the wheel, Phil went out and climbed to the top of the pilot house and with his Zeiss glasses focused on the log watched it fade away at length from the field of his immediate vision.

Absurd though he knew the fancy to be, he nevertheless kept on thinking: "Karazoff's there, paddling south. That's why he had on those flannel shorts this morning!"

Once more the glasses picked up the log, far astern.

After that Phil did not see it again.

Karazoff had gone overboard astern! And he had meant to go! Phil couldn't believe it! *Karazoff had gone overboard astern! And he had meant to go!*

Down in the galley the girls were getting breakfast. They might spare their trouble. No one would have much appetite for breakfast this morning!

CHAPTER VI

LOST AMONG THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS

AN HOUR later they were all sitting at table in the dining saloon. They had hardly tasted breakfast. Now Dr. Robson took out his old pipe and loaded it thoughtfully, and lighted it. He smoked in silence.

Phil's fists clenched. His knuckles were white on the edge of the table. He was thinking, "I'll never dare show my face anywhere after this. Last year, just because I was a gullible fool, I lost my *Silver Spar*. Now here again I go. In a straight sea road, heading down to Unimak! Lost—off our course—the day we should have stood in to the Pass—or—some day—a lot later! Karazoff's calendar says that this is Thursday, June 30. We'll let it go at that."

And now in a few short phrases Phil proceeded to explain to the others still further the predicament in which they found themselves.

They had come to where they couldn't go any farther without first taking complete astronomical observations. It was almost noon now. Billy was going to take the sun. Phil would check on Billy's calculations.

Just then Billy came into the cabin and stood by

Phil's side. Phil nodded and Billy stooped down and whispered in the skipper's ear. Phil listened. Then he frowned deeply, nodded again, and with a gasp of amazement sprang to his feet and made off after Billy, for the Eskimo mate was already halfway up the stairs.

Within a few moments he was down again in his chartroom. He had taken his observations and with his book of logarithms he was juggling with his figures, taking the figures he had found in Kay's bunk room, and comparing them with the finding from this noon's readings. At last Phil slammed his book shut. He sat back in his chair and ran both hands through his crop of red hair. There wasn't any mistake in his calculations. Billy's findings and Phil's—and Karazoff's—agreed!

Like a youth in a dream, Phil moved away toward the dining saloon where, in his absence the others had been busy with conjecture, with the study of maps and charts, and the perusal of Karazoff's old Journals. These were two bulky volumes of handwritten notes on the flora and fauna and the geology and history of the Aleutian Islands from the time of Captain Cook and John Ledyard, of Baranoff and Wrangell down to—they wagered—two hours ago!

Back there at Nome, they knew, Karazoff had had Judge Coles draw up a proper document which legally turned over the two volumes of *Notes* to Dr. Robson for editing and publishing—since Dr. Robson was en route to the States, where he would have "publishers handy," as Karazoff had casually put the matter.

The legal document had specified that royalties from the published works were to accrue to a certain Russian

girl named Judith Ivanoff. All Karazoff wanted now, he had said, was to be rid of his notes and then to begin a contemplated voyage of four or five years' duration—a scientific quest with a group of explorers and scientists who were to stop at Dutch Harbor within ten days on the first leg of their round-the-world cruise in the *Albatross II* in search of data concerning that still unfathomed mystery, the migration zones of whales.

Well, the *Aphoon* was hundreds of nautical miles below Dutch Harbor! So now Phil told them. They were, in fact, down among the uttermost islands of the Aleutian chain at the very nadir of that vast arc of islands!

The *Aphoon* was now making straight for the coast of Asia, and was, Phil surmised, just leaving the coast of Ongoo Island, heading down toward the twin islands of Angka and Kala.

They agreed finally that Karazoff had deliberately steered them off their course.

"But deuce take it!" Phil turned toward Dr. Robson. "What could have been his reasons? That's what I want to know!"

Aunt Linda's face was white and quiet. Her right hand shook as her fingers grasped the edge of the cloth.

After all her years of safeguarding Irene Robson—this!

Irene's gray eyes filled with tears of concern for poor Phil. Jeyna's face was white. Her voice broke a strained silence.

She leaned across to the wall seat and pulled toward her one of the two battered volumes of the Journals.

"Perhaps there's something in these books. May we all look at them, Dr. Robson? They were the last things Karazoff had in his hands, weren't they? Irene read a page or two and says that they are fascinating!"

"Good idea!" Phil sprang from his place to retrieve the second volume from the wall bench.

"They'll saddle us with a lot more misery, I'll bet you!" prophesied Boris, who was lounging, tall and dark and handsome, against the door jamb, looking down on the scene within the dining saloon.

There came drifting into Phil's mind the maddening refrain from some unfinished game out of childhood, "The gasoline is failing fast, my fair lady! The gasoline is failing fast, my—fa-air la-ady!"

Everyone waited. Dr. Robson spread the books flat on the table. From the pages there presently arose a musty odor and the stale smell accumulated by papers too long stored away in damp places. Dr. Robson smoothed a page, adjusted his glasses, and in a low, clear voice read from a loose sheet, the last in Volume II of the old Journals.

"My plan came to me when I saw your happy group at afternoon tea on the *Aphoon* as she lay at anchor in the Nome roadstead. Illness harries me. I am spent with years, with gruelling toil and the continued frustration of my plans. Just off the island of Ongoo, I shall leave the boat forever.

"Under storm sail, with her wheel lashed, the boat

will be heading down in a safe, straight seaway for the island of Kusko Kala. Sail south. Follow the charts that I have left in my cabin. On Kusko Kala you will find my niece, Judith Ivanoff. Her history is recorded and Judge Coles will give you all the facts you need.

"Take Judith with you to the States. Judge Coles will see that necessary funds are provided. Let the girl go straightway to school. It is better to be unborn than untaught.

"In 1918 an earthquake filled with rocks the Pass of the Whale Gates.

"In 1927 a second severe earthquake freed them again. Now it is safe for boats of deep draught to enter the Gates. But for reasons which you will discern, I should advise you to let the charts stand thus as for several years past they have stood: WHALES GATES PASS NOT NAVIGABLE.

"If a storm breaks, and you are fearful for your boat, ride out the gale at ten miles offing, or, better, fifteen. Once inside the barrier reef at the S. E. of the Gates, you will have good anchorage. Take plenty of time to look about you there and decide on plans."

Then in fine script underlined in red there followed these directions:

"From the safety inside the barrier reef, put into the harbor through the Whale Gates. When the wind is due east, with the wind, I say, at your tail, hold straight in through the Gates, for only so can you make your passage. Give the South Whale a wide berth as you go in. There is a rocky island in the bay. It is called

Puffin Island. On either side this island you will have anchoring enough. About half way across the harbor is your best anchoring. Forty fathoms and a gravel bottom and no great current even at flood tide."

Phil swung about nervously on his heel.

"Well," said he slowly, "that log book doesn't set me right on the time we've been fooling away. But, as I said before, there's nothing for it but to take his reckoning—*Thursday, June 30.* I can tell you, though, we're going to up-anchor and go back where we started from—back to Unimak Pass, anyway. We'll go as far as we can with the gas we have. We may run into some of the power boats of the fishing fleets or a gas tender or something."

Phil stopped suddenly, frowned, and then in a lower voice went on:

"The day we weighed anchor at Nome the radio bureau forecast storm for the seventh day. That allowed us time to reach Seward, anyway, in clear weather. We're several days off our reckonings, you know. Except for Karazoff's notation on that calendar"—Phil threw up his hands—"we don't know *what* day it is! That's flat!"

Dr. Robson took off his spectacles, adjusted them again, and then peered at the skipper over their rims while he said mildly:

"Just a minute, Phil, please. I've been reading on. We can't very well up-anchor and back just yet, Phil. There's more here."

"Now for the joker!" grimly Phil muttered, and

waited. There was a pause. A purple wave washed by, and the sea was a little over the starboard rail. Billy was out there, busy with the chairs on the afterdeck, getting them down to dry safety in Karazoff's cabin and the little storeroom adjoining in the foredeck. A chair thumped.

"I should have sent Judith 'outside' years ago. Lately, I think that illness has intensified in me my tendency to avoid coming to issues with life. My sense of justice has—perhaps—atrophied. I have postponed.

" 'Hast deine Kastanien zu lange gebraten
Sie sind dir alle zu kohle geraten!' "

Aunt Linda translated for Jeyna, who had liked the sound of the words, strange to the ears of a generation almost bereft of that music: "Roast your chestnuts too long, you'll have only cinders left."

"The girl on Kala has had books and such training as I could give her. My fortune, earned in a variety of ventures, in scientific research, and the profits from articles published in technical journals, in fishing ventures, etc., is hers, legally fast. See Hilary Coles about this. Her father, about whom gossip has been rife, and, as always, mostly wrong, was a political exile at Nertchinks. Freed by the Soviets, he became captain of a coastwise steamer out of Vladivostok. Suspected of having communicated with the exiled family of the Czar, the man was apprehended again and was exiled a second time, on this occasion by the Soviets themselves. By this time, however, I was aware of what had

happened. It was my great good fortune to bring Peter Ivanoff forth out of Siberia. He married. With his wife and little daughter, born at Nome, he came to visit me on Kala. He became my chief helper. He left a fortune, also, to the girl Judith; to wit, as follows:

Aqua marina.....3,000 stones
Lapis lazuli .....3,000 stones
Fine emeralds of Nertscka.....2,000 stones
Alencon diamonds ..... 500 stones

"Of gold there is a *pooksak* full. The stones and the nuggets are hidden in——" Here a blot obscured the word, then in strong black letters as if the man had wet a pencil between his lips and pressed hard, there appeared the words—"the SEAHORSE."

A sheet was missing. Then came the final paragraph of this strange document:

"If I had told you or begged you to go down to take the girl from Kala, to be reared with the girls of your family, you might have found it in your hearts to refuse. If I had left her to the kindly Coles family, she would have been reared by the out-moded Mrs. Coles, who eats too much and talks too loud.

"I did not ask. I have arrogated to myself the power of fate, of destiny. I gave you all powdered dust of the Siberian fungus. If Dr. Robson will overhaul a range or two of memory, he will recall the saying that out of Asia may come any Power whereof men's minds have dreamed. No place in the world of men is free from the mystic tide, the ebb and flow of Asia, mother of mankind.

"Now Asia, the ancient mother, stirs again.

"Strange things come to pass on the Pacific isles—even on the northerly Aleutians, where men's blood runs slow. Be watchful, therefore.

"Without chart, without compass, I could bring you down to Kala and could tell you where to cast the lead line along the island coast and beforehand assure you what fathom you would find and the kind of bottom you would be over."

"Right-o!" growled Phil, shaking his shoulders. "He did it every time up there off Unimak! Old skeezix!"

"You will go on!" Dr. Robson's even tones were continuing from those closely written pages: "You will go on."

"Like fun we'll go on!" cried Phil, his face white with anger. "This," he said, "makes me sick. Of course, it's—it's your boat, Dr. Robson! I know that! But—the—the old skeezix!"

Irene looked at Phil swiftly. Then her gaze sought the window. Another purple wave went washing by, its crest even with the starboard rail.

Oh, it wasn't Phil's fault that they were lost down here among the islands! She simply couldn't have Phil taking upon his own shoulders the blame for this disaster, when the blame was wholly old, mad Karazoff's!

What was the postscript her father was reading now?

"Judith will not greatly mourn me. I have withdrawn too much into myself to win the real affection

of the child. She is more attached to her dog and her sea lion and her otters and her lame seagull than she has ever been to me."

"Got Karazoff's goat, anyway, didn't she?" murmured Boris. "It sounds like a great adventure," went on Boris. "Treasure to find, lovely girl to rescue from a desert island. Even that lame seagull has possibilities. And as for the sea lion—*whe-ew!*"

Irene warned Boris with a look, but the young man merely grimaced at her and went on: "It's a great adventure, that's what!"

"Yes, a great adventure. Only amateurs have *adventures,*" came Phil's retort. "Others know their stuff too well to have adventures. They avoid the hazards."

"And lose their Judiths!" said Boris thoughtfully.

"Anyway," came Aunt Linda's quiet voice as she rose to her feet and began to clear the table, "I think we'd all rather be humane, and have the hazards, than be simply safe and—and smug."

Dr. Robson nodded and then turned to Phil.

"Going on, skipper?"

"Of course!" replied Phil rather shortly, for he was still cross. "We've got to find the girl, I suppose. But I've been wondering," he went on, while the light of a forlorn hope burned in his eyes. "Perhaps after all, Karazoff was out of his head a long time before he jumped ship. Perhaps there isn't really any Judith of the islands!"

"But Judge Coles told us about her, too!" interposed

Jeyna. At the same time she gave a tug at Boris's shoulder, for Boris was going on in a tone that scouted Phil's suggestion, "No Judith? I won't have anyone *no-Judithing* around here! Of course there's Judith!"

Dr. Robson rammed some tobacco down in the bowl of his old pipe, and Irene leaned down from the wall bench and took the match her father held in his hand, lighted the match, and applied it to the pipe.

"There's no chance, Phil, I'm afraid. No chance of there not being a Judith, I mean. Even the old Russian's apparently mad disappearance was carefully planned, I'm convinced, to give you a bill of clearance with the authorities for the loss overboard of a seaman in good weather."

"Sudden mania?"

Dr. Robson drew a long breath on the pipe and nodded in reply to Phil's query. "Yes. Line for line he copied in his procedure the action outlined in my little volume, *Adventures of Early American Seamen.* I recall one account in particular: Captain Warner jumped ship just that way."

Phil sprang to his feet and stood looking down at Dr. Robson while enlightenment broke upon him.

"I recall it, too. And I tell you, I found the book open at that very page the second night out from Nome when I followed Karazoff's watch. He had the nerve to mark the passage! Used that mean little stub of an indelible pencil that he hauled out of his pocket and scribbled with on every occasion. I found yesterday that he'd even scrawled a few characters from early Chuck-

chee, I suppose, on the rail, aft. I was cross enough about that!"

Boris's voice came again, "What did the old fellow use? How could he put us out like that for two or three days?"

"Perhaps the log book tells us that, too," suggested Aunt Linda.

Phil turned to Irene.

"Irene, did you or did Karazoff first suggest our having breaded cod tongues for dinner the other night, or rather, the third night out?"

Irene knitted puzzled eyebrows. She tried to think back. Before she replied to Phil's query she had a query of her own to put to him:

"Why, Phil, didn't you buy those tongues yourself at Nome that afternoon?"

"I certainly did not!" replied Phil. "The night they came on the table at dinner I thought you'd bought them yourself from the fishermen who came out to the cruiser in their dory. I thought it was queer. There aren't any very extensive banks up that far that I ever heard of. But there's never any use in being surprised at what may turn up in the North, from cod tongues to the jewels of the ex-Czar. So you didn't get them from any fisherman?"

"Phil, I didn't have a thing to do with the old cod tongues!" insisted Irene. "One afternoon when you were standing the watch, Karazoff got to telling Jeyna and me about life on the islands, at the cod fishing stations and of his experiences down there on Kala. The talk got around to what the islanders have to eat. He

told us about dishes that'd make your mouth water, didn't he, Jeyna?"

"Rather!" agreed Jeyna, her eyes on Irene's face. "Mushrooms pickled after the old Russian recipe, and a salad of steamed elderberry tips that they eat in spring—all sorts of things."

"And squids," went on Irene. "The little fellows that look so messy when they're fresh from the sea, but boil up hard and delicious like lobster meat, only a bit tougher. And Karazoff asked—oh, there isn't a bit of doubt that it was his suggestion—he said that if we'd let him, he'd be *chef* the next evening. You know you wanted to take on a cook at Nome and we all objected and fussed like everything about it. With all us women folk aboard, then to hire a cook! We wouldn't have it!"

Jeyna leaned forward now and said quickly: "He showed us how to dry the iced cod tongues. Then he rolled the iced tongues in cracker crumbs that had been smoothed out, so! And he added melted butter and a measure of salt and a tiny pinch of pepper, so!" Jeyna made hardly a movement of hand or finger and yet in a moment the galley table was spread before their eyes with a plateful of iced tongues, with rolled cracker crumbs on a bread-cloth, with salt and pepper and paprika, too.

"Did he use the galley pepper pot?" suddenly Boris demanded, banging his fist on the table and making everybody jump. "Would you girls know the pepper pot if you saw it?"

"Why, of course!" the two chorused. And Boris was off to the galley to bring back in a few moments every

salt and pepper shaker he could lay hands on—a complete assortment—but the one the girls recalled Karazoff as using was not among them.

"It was a little aluminum affair that rolled around like a humpty-dumpty," said Jeyna. "And it was labeled *salt*. I know because I was surprised to see that salt shake out *black*."

Phil faced the speaker. "You're sure about that? You see—every salt box and pepper box in the galley is white enamel with green lettering. There's not another kind on board at all, or wasn't when Billy and I took inventory of the kitchen stuff."

And there wasn't. Later in the afternoon the girls took up the search, but they were unable to find any box like the one that Jeyna described. It simply wasn't on board, that was all. Perhaps the very night he served the tongues, Karazoff had heaved the evidence overboard!

He had fried the tongues in the hot oil, then fished them neatly out of the frying-basket and tossed them on the platter to sizzle until Jeyna and Irene could rush the covered dishes to the table and call the others to dinner.

"That's when he got his chance!" Phil jerked out the words as if they had been hot coals on his tongue. "When he 'peppered' them, he added some potent kind of powder that just naturally did the business."

"What did he add?" demanded the practical Boris.

"Search me!" Phil thrust his hands in his pockets and slumped down against the upholstery of soft green leather of the wall seat.

There fell another silence. Dr. Robson closed the log book with care, his face a little white beneath its sea-going tan. He placed his napkin farther back on the table, folded it with care, and pinned the edges together with a pin that he'd taken from under his left coat lapel.

Laughingly Irene protested, "Oh, Daddy, darling! Those perfectly dreadful pins! If you'll forgive my saying so, that is an awful habit you brought with you out of Asia!"

Her father only smiled a little, then he faced the group, meanwhile flipping the folded napkin against the edge of the table as he spoke:

"It is all here in the book," said he slowly, bending his head again over the log book or Journal as he opened at a marked page to read:

"After you have lived long in Eastern Asia you reject no possibility and no mystery. Out of Asia comes the drug which gives to men the power of television. Out of Asia comes, too, that dust of the devil of whose uses the Mongols have much to tell men of the Occident.

"There is a Siberian fungus growth—the *Polyporus igniarius*—a brown excrescence of considerable size that appears on the stem of the birch tree. This fungus the Ostiaks pound to powder and use as snuff, after mixing it with a certain quantity of real tobacco. Mixed with another powder, the name of which I cannot now reveal, this flour of the igniarius used in food in large quantities causes almost instantaneous death to the user.

"Used in smaller quantities, it begets in the user a kind of intoxication similar to the effects of champagne. In still smaller quantities it produces a profound and pleasant but long continued sleep. In the latter case the after effects are negligible. A short period of foggy mindedness. That is about all. The pulse of the patient remains normal and his breathing regular. The drug is what we call self-determining, and time brings release from its effects without the use of any antidote. The antidotes are, however, these: Black coffee in large quantities. Sleep in the open air."

"Old skeezix!" This time it was Boris speaking.

"How could he know all that?" gasped Irene.

Dr. Robson mopped his forehead with a voluminous white handkerchief. "Oh, he had precedents enough to go by. Perhaps any really up-to-date physician knows of drugs which if used in certain proportions might make men seem—like gods—to themselves."

"What's that Mexican plant?" demanded Phil. "The 'magic dream plant'—something like that?"

"Apilonum Lowinii," said Dr. Robson. "It's well known."

"So it *was* the cod fish cakes!" mused Aunt Linda aloud.

"Tongues! Aunt Linda, dear! Cod tongues!" Irene corrected her gently.

"Why, great Cæsar! The old fellow deserves killing!" exclaimed Boris. "If this accident—his loss overboard hadn't——"

"That wasn't any accident," observed Phil in a tone

of disgust. "Why, even his sending us all down to Kala to pick up Judith comes from his not wanting to face real issues, I'll bet! He leaves us a plea that no decent folks could ignore, gets us started down to his everlasting old Kala, and then he goes and ducks the whole business by jumping ship! That wasn't any accident, either. He's been heading into that 'accident' ever since he ran down the gangway of the *Albatross I* years ago, as he told us, and decided he'd rather live on a desert island than go back to Washington, D. C., and work at his desk there and keep office hours!"

"I'll bet he hasn't drowned at all!" asserted Boris. "The more you figure the ability of the Aleuts in handling canoes and bidarkas, the more you think the old fellow might have swum out to some dinky boat that Phil couldn't see, and so have made off for that island of Ongoo. I'll bet he's right there on Ongoo this minute!"

Phil looked up startled. He recalled that white patch of something that might have been a sail!

"He might have done that!" conceded Phil, "but what the heck!"

"A man who could do all that planning doesn't sound very mad to me," said Jeyna. "It's probably safe to follow his directions when we make down toward Kala, isn't it?"

Boris jumped up and began to pace the floor with his game leg dragging a little. "Oh, do sit down!" Phil suddenly commanded him testily. "You make me nervous bobbing up and down like an Eskimo fishline jigging through a hole in the ice in winter!"

Boris forgave Phil his testiness. Phil had had enough worry to-day to last any skipper a year, and the day had only just begun!

"Just one more question, Dr. Robson," Phil had stood up and was making his way past the others of the group toward the inner stairway that led down to his quarters. "Early this morning I blamed my foggy-mindedness on the cod tongues—. *Is* it the after-effects of that *Polymorphous ignition whatchemacallit* that made me dog-gone tired and willing to talk all day rather than get to work on Karazoff's charts and head down for the Whale Gates?"

"Not a doubt about it, Phil!" replied Dr. Robson. "I knew that all that black coffee you drank at breakfast would gradually bring you to! You're all right now, my lad! The fresh air and hard work the rest of the day will complete the cure!"

Five minutes later, the skipper, bent over the Russian's charts, observed to Boris at his elbow that they were going to carry on for Kusko Kala, only fifty miles sou' by sou'west. Now they'd set course for the Whale Gates! They were on their way to Kala!

Dr. Robson departed for his cabin quarters after planning with Jeyna and Irene to go to work at once on the Karazoff Journals in order that they might cull out together any reference to Kusko Kala and the character of the natives, the Aleuts, and all the data concerning the flora and the fauna of the volcanic island.

Shortly afterward the group in the dining saloon heard the rough grating of chains. The boys were get-

ting ready to up-anchor! Then, a few moments later, there began again the steady throb of the engines as the cruiser headed off south by southwest through the North Pacific, bound down now for Kusko Kala, the island of the *god who strikes!*

CHAPTER VII

THROUGH THE WHALE GATES

A LITTLE after two o'clock, Irene and Jeyna went down to find ready for them in Dr. Robson's stateroom two little folding chairs and a table squeezed into the space between the berth and the opposite walls.

Little by little, between long puffs at his pipe, Dr. Robson explained to the girls the plan he had worked out for getting from the crowded pages of the Journals whatever information they might find helpful.

Karazoff's fine, spidery script was legible. Dr. Robson gave each girl a few sheets of paper and a pencil and adjured each to make note of every item that might help them to understand the nature of the place whither they were now bound.

The girls began to read. Then each scribbled a page of notes. To Dr. Robson went the scribbled sheets of data culled from the pages of the Journals. In his own large notebook, Dr. Robson had scrawled down certain headings under which he segregated data as the sheets came across the table to him:

Coal; Gold; Peat and Charcoal; Shell Fish; Sphagnum Moss; Salmon; Greenling, Cod; Berries.

Thus ran some of the titles in his notebook.

Silently for a time the three worked. The girls read on and on. Sometimes they would read and turn two or three pages without entering any notes on their sheets. Once or twice Irene uttered a smothered exclamation. Gradually the sheets were filled. Dr. Robson laid aside his pipe.

At length Irene, with flaming cheeks and eyes alight with excitement, cried, "Here's something, Father! Do let me read it aloud! It has an Ivanoff in it! Shall I, Father?"

Dr. Robson nodded, then sunk his head into his chest to listen.

"Thus it came about," Irene read, "that the old barkentine, the *Seahorse,* came to the end of her sailing. It is to be noted that both the Russian and the Chinese sailors were aware that Captain Ivanoff had in his strong box certain documents relating to the gold or copper to be found on Kusko Kala. From the return to Kala occasionally of Chinese sailors, I take it that they are members of this rescued crew of the *Seahorse,* sailors who have managed to return to Kala in the hope that they may stumble on the pay streaks described in Captain Ivanoff's accounts."

That was all. The cabin was quiet again.

And then Irene's eyes opened wide with surprise. It was odd, but she couldn't help having noticed! All the time Irene had been reading, Jeyna's eyes had been on the sheet of paper Jeyna herself was reading. Jeyna's breathing had quickened. Her cheeks had flushed. Why was Jeyna so moved?

And adroitly Jeyna had shifted a page! Yes, Jeyna

had slid one sheet from the loose leaf Journal to the very bottom of the pile of sheets!

Apparently absorbed in her own pages, Irene through lowered lashes observed Jeyna suddenly rise, turn her back to her companions, and (could Irene trust her own eyes?) deliberately extract from the pile of manuscript that last sheet!

Now Jeyna was folding the filched sheet into a small oblong and was placing it inside her blouse, which had its sailor collar open at Jeyna's firm white throat.

Irene looked swiftly toward her father. No, he had not observed! He had turned again to his own pages.

Irene was worried. What could have been Jeyna's motive? What information could Jeyna have gleaned from those pages that would not be of significance to them all, if so significant to Jeyna?

For a sharp five minutes, Irene had a flash-back to the old doubts and worries that had once come to her at Tundra Towers concerning this lovely Jeyna. Now her surprise and doubting almost suffocated her. Oh, dear! But—swiftly she decided—not for every ounce of gold on Kala would Irene again doubt her friend and chum!

"But what *can* Jeyna be up to?" she questioned herself. Her mind passed through all the stages from doubt to actual distrust and then back to clear faith again.

Jeyna had once proved herself to be such a thoroughbred! You couldn't always understand complex Jeyna's motives, but at the end you always discovered that what Jeyna *did* was—was *cricket!*

To the mystified and still anxious but always loyal Irene, Jeyna's swift filching of the sheet of manuscript continued to be inexplicable. But while she went on worriedly, hardly seeing now the black and white of her own pages, there was Boris coming limping over the threshold of the open door. Boris was wearing oilskins now, and was singing at the top of his seagoing voice:

"For ne'er shall Sailor salty be
Until he sail the Bering Sea!

For ne'er shall Sailor salty be
Until he sail—the—Bering—Sea!"

"We're in for a bad blow, folks!" said Boris now, quietly. "Where's Aunt Linda?"

They saw then that Boris was carrying in his arms four life preservers which he had taken from the racks under the ceiling of the pilot house.

"Cap'n says 'put 'em on!' " said Boris, and his young voice deepened as he stood there with one hand on Jeyna's shoulder. "And quick about it, please!"

Almost as if she hadn't heard Boris, Jeyna was going on in her even tones, "Rock ptarmigan are numerous on the slopes of the hills, and the red phalarope and the Peale's falcon, and the Hutchins geese in great numbers."

"And a bad outlook for all of us if those birds are all that Kala can offer," suggested Boris as he turned and began to help Irene adjust about her waist the cork belt of the life preserver.

No, Boris didn't think that they'd have to wear the contraptions long! Perhaps it wasn't even necessary for them to put on the life belts now. But the Captain didn't much like the looks of the weather.

The youngsters followed Boris up to the dining saloon. There was hot food just brought up from the galley. Everything from cups and saucers to plates and cream pot had been put in the racks.

Boris asked Irene to go down again and call her father. If the boat had been larger they might all have remained below deck. Now it was safer for them all up here.

Boris didn't mention the fact that even in the dining saloon they stood a chance of being carried off if the deck house were swept away by a bad sea.

"How are things going, Boris?" questioned Dr. Robson when he joined the group upstairs.

"Everything's all right," replied Boris, who was now adjusting Aunt Linda's life belt. "Phil isn't much worried. The boat has splendid maneuvering qualities. Besides, the glass has been rising considerably the last hour. It's quite likely that we'll sidestep the worst of the blow. But we have to be prepared."

"And our course?"

"Sou' sou'west for Kusko Kala. We'll be likely pretty soon to get the full weight of the east wind at our stern, you know. We're heading into pretty steep seas. Phil's putting her slowly at it. No danger now, though. At least, not much!"

So they waited.

And now, plowing through ever rising seas, the

Aphoon, at about five o'clock that evening, saw land ahead.

The wind was now up full. The tide was rising.

By this time, the boat had nosed her way down the coast alongshore off Kusko Kala at about fifteen miles offing. Now she was making for good anchorage about five or six miles off shore in a slightly protected position where in a crescent-shaped peninsula the southwestern point of the island swung about to make a sort of land-locked bayou like a monster tongue curled about a piece of green ice.

Here, as the boat held her position for an hour or so, nose in the wind and ready for the race, those in the dining saloon could observe through the glasses two monstrous cliffs. One to the north, the other to the south, these cliffs guarded the entrance to the pass and formed, presumably, the entrance to the harbor.

"North Whale and *South Whale!"* muttered Phil at his first sight of them. "Gosh! They're monsters!"

Phil had determined to await further shifting of the wind before attempting to cross the bar into the inner bay through the Gates.

And now, point by point, the wind had begun to shift. From sou'west to south—then east. Soon, he hoped, it would be due east, like flying arrow aimed at Whale Gates Pass. When the wind reached that quarter, he would take the *Aphoon* straight in between the monster Whales.

Irene had wedged herself now into a corner of the wall seat as safeguard against emergencies, hooking one

arm over the hammock lines that kept swinging erratically behind her, the cords thumping and thumping against the smooth woodwork of the walls. Three days ago Phil had hung the hammock there for Aunt Linda's convenience as an upstairs place for her mending baskets, her balls of zephyr, and her magazines. The toe of Irene's right shoe was wedged in securely between the clawed foot of the dining table and the lower edge of the wall seat.

Were they making now for the Pass?

If only the rocking and plunging of the boat would slack off a little so that she could think! Her mind was busy like a puppy with a new bone: *Why, why, why* had Jeyna hidden away in her blouse one of the papers from Karazoff's Journals? All these papers were, anyway, Robson's responsibility—for editing, publishing, and crediting to the mad Russian.

Why? Why? The wind outside with its wild shrieking, the creaking of straining timbers, the thuddings as the boat lunged on into the sea—all the sounds of the boat and the sea and the wind kept urging— *Why? Why?*

Irene lay back against the upholstery and closed her eyes and grabbed the end of the table at one especially dizzy lunge and thought about Kusko Kala and Judith Ivanoff, when she supposed she should be saying her prayers!

Gracious! Had she been falling asleep through all this roar of the seas?

"Warmest of all the Aleutians have I found Kala to be. Warmest, and with least variation in climate."

Even so, not worth a shipwreck!

"There are, as might have been expected, sulphur springs, and other hot mineral springs, too. Warm, sparkling waters. Natural bathing pools in the pock-marked rock depressions to the west of the marshes of the Bogwaddies."

And it wasn't a dream at all, but only Jeyna sitting on a hair seal cushion on the floor quoting at a time like this, from those wretched log books, or Journals! But Jeyna wasn't saying a single word about that filched paper!

Jeyna's monotone was cut short by a sudden shaking of the knees and head and hands of the reader as the boat began to spin. Both girls tried to rise to their feet. Then they found themselves in a heap on the floor, nursing hurt shins.

Good gracious! What was happening outside?

Irene managed to get up. Staggering with the continued lurches of the boat, she seized her slicker and slipped her arms into the sleeves, buttoned the collar high about her throat, and, bare-headed, made her way to the door. The door had been dogged shut. She turned back.

Again the waters were shaking the cruiser from side to side as a Big Dane might shake a kitten.

A quarter of an hour later, Irene tried again. This time the door opened. A curtain of fog and mist

whipped into her face. The waterways were awash with foam. There was sea everywhere. Phil in his oilskins, his red hair plastered flat like a bright college cap about his ears, caught sight of the girl, and shouted a warning. Irene heard only a word or two.

"Get back indoors! Hurry!" Then Phil's voice was caught by a dreadful howling wind that went sucking down the deck.

In the saloon and lounge, Jeyna, wearing her life preserver with an air, was tapping a cup of coffee from the urn in its rack. She passed the cup to Dr. Robson and spilled less than half the contents in the transfer.

Irene refused to be drowned in coffee, anyway, and sat back again against the wall, thinking about Phil and her father and Aunt Linda and all the rest of them, her thoughts spinning and whirling with the motions of the boat.

She knew that Phil, having long ago put away sextant and book of logarithms and all knowledge of celestial navigation, was working his way toward the Pass through a smother of fog and foam by the aid of Karazoff's old charts alone.

" 'Long shore again and dangerous as the tail-spin of an airplane in the lower air," she thought. Why ever didn't Phil put the boat under storm tri-sail and let her ride out the gale at a safe offing?

She knew why he hadn't.

In that old book had been written the command:

"With the wind at her tail, head straight through the Whale Gates. The flood of water is tremendous, but she'll go through!"

Was the wind lessening? Were the motions of the boat more rhythmic? Less mad? Irene couldn't tell. Aunt Linda's spectacles didn't jig any longer. The boat must have struck a smoother stretch.

The door opened a crack, just wide enough to admit Boris. He was in his wet oilskins, of course. The water was dripping from his shoulders and hat. Streamlets of moisture trickled from nose and ears.

"She's riding it out like a lamb," announced he, his voice keyed a little high in boyish triumph. "You should see her ride 'em now! Times 'em like a metronome! Up goes the wave and the crest towers above her! She lifts up her head and the wave slides under! Gee! It's great!"

No one spoke.

"Phil says to tell you that we're not going through the Pass just yet. Wind's not right yet. *On deck Kusko Kala!* That is, if you girls want to come, but be careful and hang onto the lines!

The wind had begun to go down already. Under ominous, dripping skies the day was waning. And around and above there was always the roll of the sea, and nearer and nearer, like the muttering of a herd of cattle, the roaring of the surf!

Out on deck now for a breath of wild, sweet air!

And now the barometer was rising fast, though fogs and mists were still dripping on the decks. An on-shore wind still, a wind getting round at last to the boat's tail!

The girls ventured to hail Phil at the wheel, but Phil, grim-faced and stern, ordered them back and they

dashed off to stand at the windward rail. Out there on the sea now, the kittiwake gulls and the horned and tufted puffins, like gnomish old men changed into birds' forms, rocked and teetered on the waves.

Were these masked birds—*were* they puffins—or were they, rather, just wizened old Aleut spirits come back in feathered coats to the scenes of sea-otter huntings and their seal- and whale-killings?

With their brilliant colored bills and their masked, stupid faces the birds hawked and shrieked at the voyagers and hardly stirred as the *Aphoon,* after cruising this way and that in the semi-protected bight, hove to, headed west, and the Skipper, triumphant, shouted out: "She's right! Wind's right!"

"Wind's right!" shouted Irene and Jeyna, and the two dashed indoors obedient to orders, certain now that with the wind at her tail the *Aphoon* was going to make straight for the channel between the Whale Gates!

Outside, now, the wind was increasing to a roar. Or perhaps it was the roar of surfs athwart them on each side the Gates.

Purple waves rolled past them. Green sheets of water crashed as if they would turn the *Aphoon* on her beam ends and sink her in her sea tracks.

The boat was sliding down the seas on a toboggan of white hissing foam.

Rapidly, now, and surely, the waters were setting her in toward the Pass—down through the Whale Gates to Kala! Her sails up and spread before the

following wind, the huge seas were carrying her on. There in the lounge the girls could feel the boat throbbing in a strange new current.

Down to dead slow, now, the engines, and just ticking over, steadily, always, stanch heart in body of shivering flesh—that was the boat.

The roar of the breakers came from hidden reefs.

Suddenly a towering comber crashed down on the stern like a mountain. Crashed and rolled over!

Shaking with cold, and wet to the bone with spray, Phil was holding the cruiser to her course. Beside him in the wheel house Boris wiped the brine from his face, and whipped it from out his wind-raked eyes. Then Boris dashed outside. Vast huge forms of cliffs towered above him, emerging like shadows from the fogs as the boat headed straight in from the immensities of the North Pacific—in—in—as if sucked by some irresistible vacuum into the darkness of the Whale Gates!

Now, even while the voyagers found their lips dry and stiff from honest fear, an exhilaration of danger possessed them.

Suddenly, terribly, the brave boat veered in her course. She seemed to turn. She reeled back, pivoting on her mid-ribs, climbed a steep slope, and then slid down like a steel weight, down a white blinding bottomless hill—down—down——

Where was her breath then? Gaping, she held, and then, foaming and crashing and thundering, she turned and dashed for the passage.

In the roar of her going eight bells struck.

And as if at signal the cruiser rolled back again on

her stern ends, then plunged, and the flood carried her over the drowned bar between the Whale Gates into the quiet of a rock walled harbor.

Easy as a decoy duck on a little inland salt marsh lay the *Aphoon,* just rocking with the movement of the embayed waters.

The next moment came Billy's "On deck Kusko Kala harbor!", shouted through the mate's cupped hands.

Off came life preservers, and hand in hand, with Irene in the lead, the two girls raced out on deck, where they made their way cautiously over the slippery waterways to stand, still clasping each other's fingers, silent at the port rail.

Through an intricate nest of rocks that stretched fanwise on each side the harbor just within the channel, Phil was guiding the *Aphoon*—and a ticklish bit of navigation, too!

Forward on the port the pulpit was down and Boris's voice came floating across the deck as he took soundings with the lead line:

"By the deep, *ten!*"

"Heave quick!" from Skipper Phil.

"Half eight!"

"By the mark, *seven!*"

"Quarter less six!"

Slowly the boat got away from the rocks.

Farther and farther into the harbor waters moved the cruiser. And in the twilight the two girls stood gazing out at the heave and roll of the surrounding hills. Due west, ahead of the cruiser, now, an arc of glittering peaks culminated in one lofty spire which glowed like a

torch in the shadows—Kusko Kala—the mountain of the *god who strikes!*

The skipper urged the cruiser on. With a sliding roar and clang of chains, the anchors were let go in forty fathoms in the harbor just south of Puffin Island. The cruiser now lay about half a mile beyond the center of the circular bay with her nose pointing due west.

So abrupt from here was the slope of the rock walls and the slope of the peaks beyond, that from this anchorage it was impossible to see the peak of Kala itself.

With the energy of torpedoes shot from a gun, a flock of green teal swung in through the pass between the Whale Gates and dropped down to the surface of the waters.

A few gulls tailed in the wake of the teal, but instead of settling on the bay the birds teetered and wheeled and cried mournfully and then swung off to launch themselves on what Irene thought must be an extensive lake some mile or two beyond the margin of the bay, at the foot of a high hill. Later, the girl was to learn that this was the Sea Lion Pool.

Still in their oilskins, their mouths tight with fatigue and their faces lined and tired, Phil and Boris hurried past, too much engrossed in work to see the girls out there!

And pretty soon Dr. Robson came out on deck. His face was anxious, but with that look of mild urbanity still predominant. He looked about him. Phil, catching sight of his old friend, made his way to the rail and stood with his hands in his pockets as he faced the elder man, and said:

"It's clearing a lot now. We'll probably have a fine day to-morrow. Glass is still going up. We may have to do some exploring in those hills up there if we're to find Karazoff's little girl! I can't make out any signs of lights in a cabin. Though that's not strange. It's just early twilight yet, the days are so long. Besides, the fogs are still thick down here in the valley."

"Yes, yes, that's so," said Dr. Robson absently. "The Journals say that there are stores of gasoline up there at Crageagles—Karazoff's cabin," he said. "To-morrow will tell—many things."

He placed his right hand on Phil's left shoulder as the young man stood facing him.

"This has been a splendid day's work, Phil, my lad!"

Phil turned abruptly away without saying a word. He wondered what he had ever done to be thrust into such a job as to-day's job had been! Every soul on this boat was his responsibility still, his—and Karazoff's.

Phil turned suddenly and gave Dr. Robson an inscrutable look from his young, haggard eyes.

The announcement that dinner was ready cut short the conference on deck and all the members of the cruise hurried into the dining saloon to find a hot meal on the table. For a time they were almost quiet, eating hurriedly and nervously, each engrossed in thought. Then they chattered a little about the island and the peaks and the high ranges of the hills.

And after that, by the time they had tidied up the boat a little, they were too tired to talk.

At nine o'clock, with the coming on of night, Billy urged that the night watch should be given him, so Phil

agreed to leave Billy on deck till morning, which, in this latitude, as Phil knew, must come at four or four-thirty.

Phil had no hesitancy about letting Billy go on watch, for, as had been frequently demonstrated in the past, Billy had powers of endurance that neither Boris nor Phil could equal. Often when the two white boys would be so spent that they could hardly taste even their hot tea and toast before seeking their bunks and turning in for the night, after a day on the trails and an evening spent in making camp at a road shelter in the snow, Billy would be untired.

Now, within an hour, each member of the group was asleep below deck, confident in the watchfulness of Billy.

But, for a long time, Phil could not sleep. Instead, he lay on his bed and tossed feverishly. He was full of vague forebodings, suffering the inevitable reaction from the strain and the exertion and the excitement of the past hours.

Numberless as the hosts of those old men of the sea, the tufted puffins and the crested auklets, Phil's worries came upon him. And in the still of the night with only the persistent cheeping of the petrels outside his port windows, Phil wondered whether the low-lying mists that had hidden the shores of Kala had conjured out of sight the buildings of the abandoned cod fishing station.

Phil hadn't seen any buildings at all.

Suppose now that the *Aphoon* had let go her anchors in the wrong harbor!

About eleven o'clock Billy, pacing the watch, was

astonished to see a great beacon fire blaze out from the southwestern shores of the harbor. For a few minutes he meditated calling Skipper Phil. Then the fogs hid the flames. At another angle of the deck he caught sight, too, of what he thought must be the side lights of a steamer without the Gates on the open sea. Shortly those lights, too, disappeared, and Billy continued his watch alone. He wouldn't call Skipper Phil this time!

In the late northern twilight, departing day brooded over the *Aphoon* and over the harbor of Kala, its light the light of a moon-star veiled in mists.

CHAPTER VIII

KALA HARBOR

LONG before Phil made his appearance on deck the next morning, Jeyna was up and had the old galley coffeepot boiling. And shortly afterward Billy came at Jeyna's invitation to the dining saloon for his breakfast. Just the kind of breakfast it was to make the always hungry Billy wish that he were at least three-Eskimos big!

There was a great bowlful of coffee in Billy's favorite blue china bowl from the galley. There were great slices of tender broiled ham, and three toasted rolls thickly spread with sweet butter, and there were griddlecakes floating in seas of maple syrup.

Just as Billy was swallowing the last mouthful of griddlecakes, Phil came into the room.

"Oh, hello! Hello!" cried Phil. "How did things go? Anything turn up, Billy?"

Billy's eyes suddenly clouded with unhappiness. He looked up at Phil and then, under all the brown and tan of the Eskimo skin, Billy actually crimsoned.

"Guess I fall asleep on watch!" confessed he with a shamefaced grin. "Never sleep no more like that. Queer noises she make 'em sounds all night, mos' like Eskimo ladies on Yukon when they play football in the snow, squeal mos' the time! Me 'fraid mos' all night!"

"So bad as that?"

Never would Phil tell a superstitious Eskimo, even so civilized a chap as Billy, that there was really nothing to be afraid of! It wasn't a bit like Billy to shy at a sound. But Phil questioned Billy no further just now. It wouldn't do to have the girls worried the first thing.

Billy reported the beacon fire and the steamer's lights out in the open sea. The steamer's lights didn't matter, now. The *Aphoon* was here in Kala harbor, safe enough. Within a little while, having replenished her stock of gasoline and taken on board Judith Ivanoff, the skipper and his cruiser would be gone again!

Later, with a cupful of Jeyna's delicious coffee tucked away inside him, Phil began to laugh at his last night's worries. The idea of a fellow's lying awake for hours, hunting up mare's nests worries!

He was thinking again, as he sat down to a plateful of griddlecakes and two thin strips of broiled ham, that it wouldn't take him long to make for the shore in the dinghy, find the islander's girl, get the child and her old *pooksak* of nuggets and jewels aboard, help himself generously to Karazoff's store of gasoline, order the Homeward Bound pennant broken out, and then sail away for Dutch Harbor, a wireless station, and legal advisers!

A wireless from Dutch Harbor would bring Judge Coles down by the first boat. Perhaps even Gale's *Bird of The Yukon* would land Judge Hilary Coles at Dutch Harbor. *Whoopee!*

By a kind of unspoken agreement the evening before, it had been understood, of course, among the members

of the *"foursome"* that no one should go out on deck for a survey until every one of the four should be ready.

Famished for breakfast, Boris appeared next, and then Irene. So by and by they were all quite ready for Billy's shout:

"On deck! Kusko Kala Fishing Station!"

The signal!

And they raced out, Boris ducking down to trip the captain, and the captain doing an undignified hurdle over Boris's bent form. In the scramble, Irene and Jeyna dashed ahead and were at the rail before the two boys had finished dusting their shins.

Jade green hills, all covered with moss, swept upward from the harbor on all sides in terrace after terrace of mounting splendor. High above the marsh lands and the lakes and the waterfalls, high even above the Whale Gates, to the west the towering peaks pressed their patterns against the green and rose and turquoise of the Kala skies.

Typically Aleutian all this: marshlands flat and salty; low, muskeg-like tundra covered with coarse grass and mosses and flowers with brambles and shrubs; on the slopes of the nearer hills the black of the peat mosses, and the lighter clumps of reindeer moss, like ugly patches of camel's hair on outlandish colored camels! Waterfalls and rivers and lakes blinking out!

Now at Phil's orders Boris and Billy drew up the anchors; then the boat was put into reverse speed until, traversing a quarter of the distance back to the Whale

Gates, they succeeded in obtaining once more a full view of Kusko Kala himself.

Phil's findings from his taking of sextant angles of the peak and the ranges tallied with Karazoff's specifications.

So far, so good!

They had found the hidden harbor of Kala. No doubt about that.

Now for the abandoned fishing station!

From this point, the station was now plainly visible out on shore, with the low hills sloping smoothly upward behind it. At the foot of the hills curved the beach. All about the falcate beach, clearly to be seen, were the abandoned buildings of the old fisheries.

Phil now brought old Karazoff's maps and spread them out on top of the after-cabin deckhouse. Then, through the glasses the party viewed the station, and Irene spiked down on the rough charts that Phil had just been drafting the buildings and the other spots which they could from this distance identify.

Over toward the east, they decided, were the salting houses, marked on Kay's map with red arrows. These salting houses were long, low buildings with no windows. Just to the right of the salting houses, they thought, must be the old salt house, where were stored the great supplies of salt used in preparing the cod for shipment.

To the right of the salt house and at a lower level was the long log building that must have been a sort of men's club. Back of the general office building, about thirty rods back from shore, higgeldy-piggeldy on the

hillside, were the cabins of such of the fishermen as had taken native wives and built homes for themselves. Picketed corrals flanked some of these cabins.

After a time Phil laid aside his glasses. Stooping down over Kay's charts he began to pull at the lock of hair that would persist in tumbling down across his forehead.

"It's dashed strange," he murmured, "that Karazoff didn't put his own cabin on the map! It's off the chart entirely. Just like Boris's spiking our position on top of the Himalayas, a few days ago!"

"I'll wager Karazoff never *had* a cabin here!"

At Boris's words, Jeyna turned sharply away from the group and went to lean on the port rail looking down deep into the green waters of Kusko Kala, the morning wind just ruffling her bright dark hair.

She heard Boris going on in that high nervous voice of his, full tilt: "I'll bet Judith is thirty-five years old if she is a day! She married a cod fisherman fifteen years ago and—" his mind forecast the worst—"she's living down at Anchorage now, ordering her patent leather pumps that hurt her feet by mail-order catalogue. . . . Oh, wowsie!"

"Having your feet hurt by mail-order catalogue wouldn't be too painful!" suggested Irene quietly. Then Jeyna swung about in her turn.

"Yes," she cried cheerily, "and when Judith went 'outside' she took her *pooksak* of nuggets and her lapis lazuli and all the rest of her semi-precious stones with her!"

"That's just what she did!" Boris abetted Jeyna.

"Talk about bagging the bullion! Not that we begrudge Judith her inheritance, but to think of all the excitement she's probably cheated us of! Well, then, that's that!"

Jeyna turned her back to the rail and faced the others.

"There's a sprawling cabin perched right on the first ledge of the hills to the southwest up that long ridge. Right at the elbow where the rock spur jogs off toward the sulphur-vent!" She was pointing out the way. "There! Follow that ridge that runs up behind the salt house. Can't you see? There's a mossy green roof. No, there are three separate roofs! All in a huddle!"

"I see!" Boris lifted his glasses for a closer look. "Low visibility this morning. The cabin's there, all right!"

Apart from the others, now, Irene was paraphrasing softly to herself one of the bits of verse that she had loved so in the lonely days at Tundra Towers before the others came:

> "There is a cabin
> 'Neath a gray ledge
> Betwixt earth and heaven
> At the world's edge."

Suddenly she looked over her shoulder, beckoned to the others, and motioned them over.

"Somebody's stirring about up there. She's coming down the trail. It's Judith, of course!"

"Just a wisp of fog!" argued Boris. "A wisp of fog —or a mountain goat, and a lonely old goat, at that!"

Two pairs of binoculars proceeded to bring the hill and the green-roofed cabins close. How could they

have missed them before! But that green moss on the roofs furnished camouflage par excellence!

The wisp of white on the trail held their attention now.

"It's human, all right! Walking on two legs!" Boris announced. Then he went on, "And there's a lot of smoke coming out of the cabin chimneys. Looks like an old-fashioned terraced garden, too, down along the trail. There's mignonette in that garden, and radishes and turnips and potatoes, just as Kay's Journals tell about 'em!"

Suddenly with a queer smothered sound in her throat, Jeyna turned away from her companions and ran down the companion stairs to her little stateroom. Here she threw herself down on her berth and put her head down in the pillows and sobbed.

She was wretched and frightened and foreboding. She never wanted to go up on deck again! She knew that all the members of the cruise were doomed to stay forever here in this landlocked bay, with the green hills crouched all about them like monstrous green dragons curled up feigning sleep—but watching—watching!

Her unhappiness was brief but intense. She did not cry long. After a few moments she sprang from her berth and with her head thrown back crossed to the port window and opened it wide to the sweet salt airs of Kala.

For just a moment she leaned against the window. Then she steadied herself a little. She listened hard again. She tilted back her head. It was uncanny. She felt her face flushing and her right hand shook a little as it

clutched the bolt on the window. She repeated over and over again, "Bay of Kala! Bay of Kala! Bay of Kala!"

Then she whispered, "There! I could say it! I'm—I'm not out of my head! I do hear a motor boat!"

She stood listening breathlessly, assured that she had heard an actual sound, and that she was not in her mind listening to a creation of her own fantastic imagination.

She heard the sputter of a motor boat with some of her batteries undeniably out of kilter.

Now, straining her eyes in the shadows of the cabin, Jeyna could see a little craft like a fisherman's dory just putting out from behind the abandoned wharves of the station. She could hear the electric horn, a sharp staccato cry like a loon's cry, wild and free, as the boat careened over the water and came toward the *Aphoon*. In this bay of the wilderness—a motor boat! Well, why not? Swiftly Jeyna recalled that even the Eskimos at Colshak and the Towers in the Tundra had owned gasoline launches and swift motor craft of sorts.

"One motor's dead and the other's about done for!" whispered Jeyna to herself. "No wonder the boat's got sails to her!" By now she could see the stowed mainsail. If, perhaps, that was a real fisherman stooping down there in the cockpit! Perhaps a man who lived in one of the shore cabins! A forehanded, proper sort of fisherman! One who always kept on hand a large supply of gasoline for stranded people. A man who slept in bed with his boots on! One who ate dried salmon and dried smoked herring and even, on occasion, raw frozen fish! A man who drank gallons of strong tea and weak coffee, and perhaps swore fulminic oaths.

If only he were *that* kind of man!

Jeyna raced up to the deck. Here, grouped together for'ard, Irene and Phil and Boris and Billy, too, were talking together in eager, excited tones. Only Billy of all that now gay group looked dismal and unhappy. His usual smile now in total eclipse, Billy placed one hand on Phil's arm and drew the skipper a little aside from the others.

"What if 'em pirates here?" demanded Billy, falling back into pigeon English as he always did in moments of excitement or whenever one of the girls spoke to him: "Pirates' Cove, her not verry far from Unimak. Mebbe 'nother Pirates' Cove, her right here! Mebbe heap lotta pirates here!"

"Pooh, Billy!" Phil chided his mate. "What's got into you? There aren't any pirates around here. Nobody anyway, except old Karazoff and we ourselves know the trick of getting into the harbor. Most folks still think that the Gates are—are shut, Billy, old boy! And that noise that kept you awake, the noise we heard a little while ago, was just the wind coming through a hole in the rock wall up there on the heights. I saw such a megaphone once, on Unimak!"

Billy still looked worried, but he smiled again as Phil clutched him by the shoulder and dragged him back to the rail. They looked down. A motor dory was drawing up alongside the *Aphoon*. The group at the rail fell back a few paces toward the stern. They could see a girl down there in the dory's cockpit, the tiller under her arm.

"There she is!" somebody whispered.

"I take it all back! Karazoff was a truth-teller and a gentleman!" apologized Boris. The sputtering old motor missed a few beats, caught up, missed again. The boat slowed jerkily within a few feet of the cruiser, then swiftly came up alee.

Billy had opened the port gate aft and let down the accommodation ladder and was standing by. And now all the members of the *Aphoon* party, including even Dr. Robson and Aunt Linda, gathered at the gate by the ladder, looking down. The stranger, it appeared, hadn't made up her mind to come up, in response to their invitation, nor did she appear to relish the idea of Phil's coming down, as he was obviously on the point of doing.

The girl was still holding off, scrutinizing them at what must have been a tiresome angle of observation.

Irene looked down. She saw a slender girl of sixteen, perhaps, lithe and graceful, Irene thought, observing the rounded arms and the slim brown hands that held the tiller of the boat. Irene liked the girl's round, firm little face and the thickly lashed blue eyes, open and frank as the dawn. The girl was fair, with an abundance of glorious bright curls combed straight upward from her forehead and bound about her head by a silver comb that shone with jade.

The girl wasn't beautiful, exactly, at least from this distance. And Irene, to her own astonishment, found herself relieved of one subconscious worry. Had that jealous little worry been haunting her all the way down toward Kala from the hour when first she had known that they were coming to rescue Judith Ivanoff?

From under her cloud of golden hair on top of her round little head the girl looked with a kind of timidity yet with poise and courage too.

"Pretty, isn't she?" whispered Jeyna. Irene gave Jeyna one swift glance over her shoulder. If the captious Jeyna found the stranger pretty, she must be—beautiful!

"Boris is positively hypnotized!"

There was an odd new quality in Jeyna's even tones—a quality that Irene had never before detected. It set Irene to wondering. Why should Jeyna get edgy about Judith Ivanoff?

The next moment Irene had forgotten her wonder. There were so many other things to think about! Irene looked down again. The girl's cloak was a gorgeous thing! It hung in long straight lines from her shoulders as she stood there at the tiller. Now Irene could see that it was a cloak of ermine—ermine of a shade of saffron, with a cross-fox collar. Two orange-and-brown cross-fox pelts made that collar! A glorious color scheme for this bay of Kala with its dark shadows over green waters and moss-green hills! And there—from under the girl's left arm—an orange colored little Pekingese poked out his head!

Irene smiled straight down into the eyes of the stranger and the stranger threw Irene a look of friendliness.

Then she nodded at Phil, only the briefest of cranial jerks, but for all that, an order! She reached out and caught hold of the ladder.

Now at close range she was definitely beckoning to Phil.

"You're chosen, skipper! Oh, how I wish *I'd* skippered this ship! It's all because of that seagoing cap you're wearing this morning!" Boris helped Phil along the deck with a good-natured push while he continued: "I'm hurt to the heart! Now, why couldn't she have chosen me?"

"Give me a hand. Toss me that old cap, Boris! There!"

With the words, Phil was backing off the deck to the ladder. After a low-voiced communication to Billy, who had stooped down to hear, the skipper was gone.

Presently there came a little thud and a rocking movement of the old dory, and Phil had landed in the cockpit beside the girl. And all the time, Irene was smiling down at the two and was thinking to herself, "Phil will certainly get into another jam! Then what shall we do?"

A murmur of voices came floating up from the dory.

"Phil can't be going ashore with Judith!" whispered Jeyna. Irene shook her head. "Of course not. At any rate, not just now!"

Then to the amazement of those who stood gazing down from the deck of the cruiser, there came the halting stutter of the decrepit motor. Easily, without any further warning, the old craft swung out from under the lee of the *Aphoon* and with a preliminary series of eruptive jerks, moved off toward shore.

With one accord those left behind turned to stare unbelieving into one another's eyes.

"Mercy!" cried Jeyna. "She's—she's kidnapping Phil!"

"Don't be a goose!" Irene cried. "You know that Phil hasn't been kidnaped! Things don't happen that way, dear!"

"But they *do* happen that way!" Jeyna put in with asperity. "You can't deny, can you, that that sort of thing happened at Tundra Towers? Then why can't it happen down here?"

Irene wouldn't argue, but she set her head at a haughty little angle that made it quite clear that she didn't agree with Jeyna.

Boris drew up a deck chair. He stuck a long pair of legs over the arm of the chair and groaned. "Next time, Mr. Skipper Wayne," said he, "we'll draw lots!"

Billy now appeared advancing up the deck with his usual somewhat shuffling gait.

"Cap'n left message for you, sir," said Billy, touching his cap to Dr. Robson, who stood at the companion head about to go below. The elder man faced about and the two girls stood by. With a smile of understanding Dr. Robson motioned for them to join the audience. Whatever Billy had to report, the others might hear, too.

"Skipper Wayne, he go now see whether pirates here on Kala," said Billy slowly, with a friendly smile. "He remember pretty well some things that happen las' year up there in the tundra country. He say he go now find lay of land, that's all!"

"And quite right of Phil quite right!" Dr. Robson

nodded. "We shall wait, meanwhile, for Phil's report. Not much else we *can* do, is there, Billy?"

"Nothin' else!" said Billy, with a grin.

"But Phil didn't take the dinghy!" Jeyna burst out excitedly. "It's perfectly silly of Phil to go out there on shore—alone like that! Just as if we'd not *all* want to be in on the danger, if there *is* any danger! And I expect there'll be plenty!"

"When it comes to a showdown, dinghy or no dinghy, we could *swim* for the shore!" suggested Boris, viewing the strip of water between the cruiser and the abandoned wharf, behind which the motor dory had disappeared from view.

Irene drew herself up sharply and looked at her two young guests.

"Why, you're not planning to tag along after Phil, are you?" she demanded, her gray eyes flashing with indignation. "You couldn't do that! Phil expects every one of us to stay right here till he comes back! And on any boat, you know, the skipper's wish is law!"

Dr. Robson, who had overheard the verbal flare-up, now interposed mildly:

"Phil's self-control and his great good sense will keep him from running into avoidable hazards. You mustn't worry." The right hand of the speaker swept the hills and the green waters of the bay and the towering western peaks in a wide gesture. "Of course no danger lurks here."

"Holy mackerel!" protested Boris. "It doesn't look any too safe to me—this place doesn't! Why, anything

could happen out in those spinach colored hills! Even Billy has a premonition of fear! At least, he looks awfully worried!" And Boris looked over toward Billy, who was standing at the rail, his eyes fixed on that spot where the old dory had last been seen by the watchers on deck the *Aphoon*. Billy half turned now and looked at Boris in a puzzled way as if his thoughts and his inner vision were on someone or something quite different from Boris Asche.

Billy's old chum, his captain and leader, was gone. Phil Wayne might never come back!

On the old government schoolship, Billy's shipmate had been a native Aleut. From him had Billy heard the tales of the island spirits, of those Vey'gli who haunt the harbors and the hills of the Aleutian archipelago. Billy knew more than any white person, more than anyone not a native could ever know about the Vey'gli! *"Ai-o!"* To himself Billy whispered now the Eskimo's ancient minor cry of sorrow: *"Ai-o! Ai-o!"*

Perhaps Phil Wayne had been snatched away by the island sorceress, by the Woman of Magic! No Eskimo but knows her, although not for anything will any Eskimo tell you about the Woman of Magic unless he knows you well and has shared adventure and adversity with you, mushing after the dog teams on the Yukon trails, or floundering in shipwreck among the drifting floes of the Bering Sea, or searching lost cut-offs on the winter tundras.

As a little boy in the hut by the Yukon River, Billy had gone to bed at night on his bunk. The bunk had been piled with furs and blankets, and Billy had pulled

up high about his head the robe of white reindeer or of soft, plaited furs that so he might shut out the dreadful gaze of the Woman of Magic. And sometimes, even now, grown man that he was, Billy would fancy that he had caught a glimpse of her when a curtain stirred mysteriously on a still night, or the cabin cracked with cold in the first freeze-up.

The children of the Woman of Magic turn into ermine or mink, as every native knows. They hide among the bed furs; and in the nighttime, if you don't watch out, they eat their way right through to your heart.

That girl with the shining topknot had been wearing a parka of summer ermine, hadn't she? And everyone knows that an ermine parka is the dress of the Woman of Magic!

Suddenly now, with a smothered cry, Billy leaped to his feet from the stool where he had been perching, his legs twisted about a coil of line on the deck. High about his head Billy waved his arms.

And at the same instant, from far up on the hill trail that faced the sun, something flashed through the air. Like a giant, phosphorescent flea, a glint of light hopped across the white canvas of the deck.

Billy, who had started up to face the bay and the shore, now turned and crooked a finger, motioning to the others.

"C'm'ere!" he cried. Billy's face was radiant. The others rushed over at his bidding, laughing together, their volatile spirits high again, now that waiting was over. In the scramble, Boris was first at the rail beside

Billy. Next came Irene, and then Jeyna, who had under her right arm Phil's dog-eared copy of the *Airman's Question Mark* and under her left a box of chocolates.

"What's up, Billy?" Boris had sung out, leaping down from the platform where he had been examining the davits. At a squeak, he thought, they could—and they would—lower the dinghy over the side and put out for shore. "Something doing now, Billy?"

An imperative gesture from Billy hushed Boris's words. Billy continued to gaze out across the harbor as if he were *hearing* with his eyes. Billy's whole body listened. "Pretty soon get 'em wig-wag!" said he softly as if to himself.

For Billy there were no other persons now anywhere at all in the harbor of Kala except Skipper Phil on shore and his man Billy on the cruiser. "Me wait!" Billy half whispered to himself. "Pretty soon we get 'em message!"

"The dickens we get 'em!" began Boris, but Irene dug her elbow into Boris's side and warned him. "Oh, Boris, please do keep still! Don't try to make Billy foozle now!"

"Look at Billy!" whispered Jeyna. "Look!"

Still with that curious intent gaze the mate was facing shoreward. At length, his face assumed a baffled, perplexed, almost terrified expression.

"What is it, Billy?" murmured Irene in bewilderment as a metallic flash of light burst from a spot on the hill trail.

DASH DASH DOT DASH, went the lights.

"SHINE SHINE STOP SHINE!" whispered Jeyna.

There was a silent pause. Half a second later, from the hillside just below the long group of buildings up the trail from the harbor, a light flashed out. Then another. Then a third and a fourth. After that there came what to Irene and Jeyna and Boris seemed to be a blinding succession of flashes, and Billy said through a corner of his lips to Boris, "Morse! Me read him all right!"

"Attaboy!" Boris whispered back, and then repeated, "Attaboy!"

"Skipper say, 'Everything skookum!'" reported Billy slowly.

Shortly afterward, from farther up the hillside, off to the left, high above a ridge of black basalt that shone in the sun, there came another series of flashes.

Then Billy, before three pairs of surprised young eyes, went limp all over, with a drooping of his strong arms and a weakening of his knees. His brown face suddenly went yellow as he looked first at Irene and then at Boris as if urging them to bolster up his courage.

"What was the rest of the message, Billy?" asked Irene, her face sobered. She did so sympathize with terrified, inarticulate old Billy! And the thought came to worry her, "If Phil is *all right,* why on earth is Billy so frightened?"

Billy opened his lips as if to speak. Then he shut them with a smack. He shook his broad shoulders and looking across to Irene, said, with his eyes on hers, "Skipper's wigwag, her say 'all right.' Pretty soon comes somep'n more. Now pretty sure everything not all right. Skipper usually sign off by wigwag, 'So long! So long!'"

Irene stepped over and placed her hand on Billy's

arm while her gray eyes studied his unhappy face. "And after that last message. Skipper Phil didn't sign off, Billy? Is that what's troubling you?"

Billy nodded his head as if still dazed from a sudden blow.

He looked hard at Irene and the girl knew that he had heard her question only dimly and as if from far away.

"What *is* the matter?" demanded Jeyna a little impatiently. She was anxious to have done with excitement. They weren't going to let Boris take her out to shore in the dinghy. Phil had just wigwagged that he was safe on Kala. Why discuss the thing further? What else needed discussion? Jeyna thought that she'd like to fish for a while from the deck of the boat. Billy had taken some tomcod on a hand-line this morning—a good take—for the cod were greedy things.

"Why," Irene was explaining now. "Billy's pretty certain that Phil is heading into difficulties out there. I guess that's it, anyway. Billy hasn't really told me, yet." She turned to the native. "Oh, Billy, do tell us!"

"Her this way," said Billy. "Me get 'em wigwag with the right sign-off—'So long!' Then from high trail off to the left of that cabin up there, someone else him wigwag message, too!"

As Boris's mind took in the significance of Billy's explanation, Boris leaned down from the rail where he had been perching, and said, "What's that, Billy? You're sure? Karazoff said *explicitly* there was no one on Kala but the members of his own household. I remember that he said, two or three different times, 'Just

the folks at Crageagles—my niece and the Aleut hunter and the Eskimo woman.' "

"What *was* the second message, Billy?" Irene queried. "You haven't told us yet. What *did* the second message say?"

"'Scuse me, well," said Billy; "that message her say pretty plain, 'You white folks on that boat get to the ('scuse me!) dickens out of here!' "

Dejectedly Billy slumped down again onto the stool.

There was a strained silence and then Boris said, "And the sender didn't sign off?"

"No," said Billy. "No sign-off at all!"

Now suggestion followed suggestion: couldn't Billy wigwag a warning to Phil? Couldn't he somehow let Phil understand that someone else on Kala was signaling the cruiser? Couldn't he? Wouldn't he? No. Billy refused to send a message and no one but Billy knew the code. If Billy sent a warning, the other "bad party," as Billy called him, would get the message, too. Better let the "bad party" believe that he had fooled those on the cruiser. Let him hug the delusion that those on the *Aphoon* thought the sender of the first mssage to be the sender of the second also.

Well, at any rate, finally Boris suggested, the old rule of the sea was canceled. Now Billy and Boris could go ashore in the dinghy. They could find Phil Wayne and warn him and bring him back safe to the cruiser.

To this course Billy interposed objections. No. Billy would refuse to let anyone else swing the dinghy down over the sides till time for boat practice late this after-

noon. There was a determined light in Billy's eyes. It was clear that if necessary Billy would fight to keep Irene and Jeyna and Boris on the cruiser. Hadn't the skipper left Billy in charge? And to Billy, the skipper's word was more than law!

Jeyna's lips tightened and she said, under her breath, to Irene, "Obstinate as a mule, isn't he?" But Irene still held with Billy and the law!

So for the rest of the afternoon they dawdled the time away. Jeyna read her book and ate too many chocolates. Boris tinkered away at the dumb-waiter that ran from galley to dining saloon, for the contrivance had stuck this morning and as a result a platter of waffles had landed fore, aft, and amidships!

Aunt Linda accomplished her daily marathon about the decks and for a while Irene lounged in her deck chair alternately reading and dozing and at intervals leaving the chair to take the Zeiss glasses and search the hills and shores and the abandoned fishing village for some sign of Phil Wayne, Skipper!

Toward the late sunset they made out a figure moving up there toward the western end of the crescent beach where the sands ran up like boiling surf. Shortly afterward a smudge of smoke puffed up, then flames. Phil had a bonfire going!

"There she blows!" shouted Boris, seeing the flames. "There she blows!"

"Where away?" came Jeyna's antiphonal query—the old whalers' retort. "Where away?"

Boris hardly heard.

"Phil doesn't intend to stay out there all night, I

hope!" he exclaimed. The suggestion being untenable, they reassured themselves that Phil would soon be coming back to the cruiser in the old dory skippered by Judith.

Already Jeyna had flung herself into a chair. Now she opened a magazine and began to read an article on the autogyro and the Diesel engine. She wished that she might learn to fly. At some schools in the East and in a good many western schools, too, she'd heard, there were being given courses in aviation for girls. She'd take a course in aviation next year! She'd have her own plane! Now she took up pencil and paper and began to sketch her plane. Somehow, in spite of Jeyna's lack of skill at drawing, too, that sketched plane took on the stunning lines of the famed *Bird of the Yukon!*

Irene went down to her stateroom for a wash and a brush-up. Presently she returned. Billy had gone off to dress the fish that Jeyna had taken earlier in the afternoon. They would all have supper out here on deck in order that they might be nearer to Phil there on shore! There would be a chill in the air at supper time. Irene dashed downstairs again and brought up wraps for Aunt Linda and Jeyna. As she passed her father's door, she called to him and warned him to bring a coat when he came up on deck.

Then she hurried down into the galley to get supper while Jeyna and Boris arranged the table in the sheltered afterdeck.

The day was coming to an end. A flock of green teal came hurtling in again through the Whale Gates to settle down on the waters of the harbor this side the

old wharves. A golden eagle soared dark and splendid against a sky of copper all flecked with streaks of green and orange light. Slowly the colors faded. Shadows of the hills began to cut across the gray, silvered waters. The smoke of Dr. Robson's cigar floated out into the faint blue mists that rose from the harbor.

CHAPTER IX

KALA STRIKES

IT WAS after supper that evening and they were sitting in their heavy wraps, watching the play of lights upon the waters of Kala and listening to the chirpings of the Leach's petrels that flew about the cruiser. The cut and slither of wings went on incessantly. Irene was wrapping Aunt Linda in a plaid rug, arranging the folds carefully. Every other minute, too, Irene was looking out across the bay toward Phil's smoldering bonfire. Dr. Robson walked over to the rail and stood there smoking and very silent, for he was in one of his thoughtful, almost abstracted moods. Jeyna sat in a shadowy corner and never once turned her gaze toward the shore of Kala. Boris came up from the engine room where he had been consulting with Billy about who should stand the night watch.

Suddenly Jeyna burst out in an exasperated tone, "Oh, Boris, for goodness' sake let's do something! Dance, or listen to the Victrola!—Anything!"

So Boris went to hunt for the portable. Pretty soon he returned with Phil's little Taorola, which he placed on a table. He put on a record and swung Jeyna to her feet into a one-step to the tune of *Hot Toast, Buttered Toast!*

Dr. Robson moved about and found a chair near Aunt Linda's and the two old friends talked together fitfully about the history of the Aleutian islands, a subject which Dr. Robson knew well, from years of study. Irene was sitting now tense in a deck chair, one arm lifted to the rail till the arm went to sleep and became leaden. Irene's heart was heavy. Her mood was quiet. And presently she began to feel that all the others were too unheedful. Here were Jeyna and Boris dancing their second or third one-step. And Aunt Linda and Daddy were sitting there, throwing their little pebbles of history into the great dark pool of the night! Listening to them, Irene was rebellious. In another minute she would—she would *scream* and tell them that they should be thinking about Phil Wayne, out there now on the black shores of Kala!

Subdued to a murmur beneath the rollicking measures of *Hot Toast* her father's voice came distinctly: "Yes, if one of the Aleuts is lost crossing a tide-rip in the straits, he is often supposed to have joined the bands of spectral outlaws—the Vey'gli."

"It *is* a fascinating legend, isn't it?" Thus Aunt Linda approved the modicum of Aleutiana and the owner of the *Aphoon* went on: "As you say, too, the climate is mild. During all the years the Russians kept records on some of the islands the temperature never fell below zero. The effects of the Japanese current, of course! For practical purposes, weather records are more important, to be sure, than any group of legends or folk tales."

"Wonderful! To think what Sir Hubert Wilkins'

explorations and Commander Byrd's will tell us about the very sources of weather at the Antarctic! In the North, now—the Arctic——"

Just let Aunt Linda say "wonderful" again, and the word would be Irene's cue for giving vent to that scream!

Irene looked out across the waters again and tried to forget the dancers and the students of Aleutiana. How like a tremendously tall candle Kusko Kala looked to-night! He must be lighting the stars to sleep. So many lights on dark Kala! Yet all the subdued glow of multitudes of nodding stars, all the phosphorescent glow from the waters, all the streamers of flame color that hung from Kala's peak, had what her father would call their "geometric locus" in the pale little shore light that Phil, supposedly, was keeping alive under the lee of the round dark hills. Perhaps it wasn't Phil over there!

Boris and Jeyna paused in their stepping and Jeyna drifted to Aunt Linda's chair and perched on the arm and drew Aunt Linda's rug a little closer about that good lady's shoulders. Boris stooped down and gave Irene a little pat on the shoulder.

"Won't you dance?" said Boris. Irene looked like such a little wisp of a person as she curled down in the great chair. She shook her head, though her gray eyes smiled at Boris under their serious brows. She wasn't in the mood for a one-step.

"I'm going to ask Billy to take us over to shore in the dinghy, after all!" suddenly she cried out. "Phil can't expect us to stay here forever, making conversa-

tion about why the Aleutians are treeless and why the temperature seldom falls below zero! All the time, Phil may be over there alone, and in danger!"

"In danger on a deserted island, or an island that's practically deserted?" Boris laughed shortly.

"But it isn't a deserted island!" insisted Irene. "There used to be ever so many fishermen employed here in the old days. Probably hundreds of persons 'outside' know about the Whale Gates and Kala Harbor. Besides, we know that someone wigwagged us after Phil signed off. Perhaps even Karazoff himself didn't know all that is going on here on the island of Kala. Dr. Gale told me that the Aleutians were becoming important as prospective air bases—all that sort of thing."

"I know," Boris agreed. "He said that with the perfecting of the great Siberian airways system, the Aleutian islands were of increasing interest to every nation. He said that Russia and Siberia had even sent out reconnaissance parties, didn't he?"

"Yes."

Irene strolled to the rail and stared out across the waters.

Dr. Robson stood up suddenly, then he sat down again, just as suddenly, and drew a long puff on his pipe.

And Boris thought, "Irene struck *twelve* that time. Her father overheard what she said about the airways, and he's worried, too!"

"There's no use in trying to persuade Billy to take us over there," said Jeyna. "I've used up all the arguments. Billy won't hoist an anchor or heave a lead for a

sounding till Phil Wayne gives him the order. I've given up teasing. Billy's in charge now, as Irene said, a while back, and Billy's a regular old sea wolf, that's all!"

"But *your* teasing doesn't count, Jeyna!" Irene said with a little ripple of laughter in her voice. The idea of *Jeyna's trying* to bribe Billy! "Every time you speak to Billy, he's like a bird hypnotized by a pointer. To Billy, you're the Woman of Magic, Jeyna!"

"And to plenty of others besides Billy!" teased Boris. "I noticed that back there at Nome. Even Dr. Wade Gale acted sort of hypnotized, too!"

Jeyna said nothing. There in the darkness, though, the rich crimson flooded her cheeks. Really, she hadn't consciously been thinking about Dr. Gale at all! But—but—unconsciously, she hadn't thought about anything else—or anyone else!

And now Dr. Robson sent the two girls off to bed. And a little later, down in his cabin, he loaded his pipe again and gave himself to many serious ponderings of the risks, known and unknown, in which they were all, owners and guests, and skipper and mate, alike involved.

However you looked at it, the hazards were great. An early departure from Kala was perhaps too much to hope for, though Phil, resourceful and courageous, might manage somehow. They were off the regular sea lanes in a harbor cove, landlocked, and rock-walled from sea to sky. The cruiser's supply of gasoline was frightfully low. Even counting, as they could, on obtaining supplies of gas at Kala, from Karazoff's great stores, Dr. Robson felt that he had reason for fore-

boding. Reason to anticipate trouble. Again and again he summed the column of debits. And as he summed up the hazards, he realized, too, that not one of these hazards had been overlooked or even minimized by Phil Wayne, Skipper.

Pretty soon, to interrupt his thoughts, Irene came tapping at his door. She came in still fully dressed in her dark blue skirt with the wide side plaits, the blue reefer jacket over the white Shetland wool sweater, with her red scarf knotted about her throat.

"Oh, Daddy!" she cried. "It's of no use at all for me to go to bed! I'll not be able to sleep a wink for wishing that Phil would come to tell us about the island, and about Judy, too!"

And for a few minutes they visited together.

"Gallant old Dad!" thought Irene as a little later she snuggled down in bed. "He's worrying too much, the darling!" Then she relaxed like a sleepy kitten and in a second she was asleep.

It was Boris's watch on deck and for a long time he paced to and fro. The late twilight deepened into night. And all the time, on the dark waters of Kala there was movement and the stirring of shadows. Slowly, stealthily, like sea monsters slipping down silently from shore into their element, that salt sea water, the mountains were moving their dark bulks (or so at least it seemed to Boris) down—down into the salt brine of the harbor.

Once a flight of night birds swooped down among the fiords of those bottomless depths, deep down among the inverted gorges and the shadowy, inverted hills,

against whose sides the waters laved and washed with incessant whisperings.

All about the boat and the solitary watcher on deck the night was closing in. Once, finding himself a little moved by the loneliness of his vigil, Boris sought out Billy, who was asleep under the sheltering roof of the afterdeck, curled up in a great woolen blanket. Stooping down, Boris shook Billy's shoulder gently, and getting no response the first time, shook a little harder. This time, Billy roused a little and Boris said, "Say, Billy, after we lowered the dinghy in practice just before twilight, we let it ride out there. The water's quiet. The boat isn't scraping our sides, but hadn't we better get her in?"

"No, let 'em ride!" Billy muttered. "Phil Wayne say, 'To-night's boat practice jus' as usual. Then let the dinghy ride. Leave 'em right there unless storm her come.' Skipper may need her quick, you bet!"

"Right-o, matey!" came Boris's acquiescence in a hushed late-at-night voice. " 'Night, Billy!"

Boris tramped on.

The ship's clock struck three bells. *One-thirty!*

And now, like a shadow, Jeyna emerged from the companionway, her sleek head poised erect on slim shoulders as she approached her brother. She came up from the passageway into the dim halo of light shed by the swinging lantern.

"Aren't you awfully cold up here?" she queried.

In spite of his wool shirt and heavy sweater, Boris shivered. "A little," said he. "I chucked my mackinaw

into the galley when I went down for a snack just now. I'll get it. Better come down with me, though. Even with Billy on deck, I don't like to leave you here. And Billy's dead to the world with sleep. The—what-you-may-call-'ems—Vey'gli could walk right off with the boat and Billy'd never hear them!"

"I'll get the coat for you!" Jeyna dashed off.

A moment later she was back again, wearing her old dark tweed jacket with its high collar of silver fox—an old, old garment now, worn almost threadbare in sub-arctic service at Tundra Towers. Over her arm Jeyna carried a stiff old lumberman's jacket. "Put it on right away!" she commanded, and she held up the coat while Boris ran his arms into the sleeves.

"Don't send me down," she pleaded. "I can't make it seem right for us to be sleeping while Phil's over there in that wilderness of moss and heaven knows what 'varmints' as the Colshak trader used to say! Any minute now, Phil may want help."

After a growl of brotherly disapproval Boris let Jeyna stay up, and for an hour the two made the rounds of the little boat together.

Then the moon came up suddenly. Out over the smoothly stirring waters of the harbor, a light ripple showed in the moonlight.

Jeyna stepped to the rail and stood looking out over the waters. Suddenly she gave a smothered gasp. With both hands clutching the rail, now, she leaned out. Horrified, yet apparently unable to stir, she peered down.

"My heavens!" she cried. "Boris, look! I saw some-

one—*someone* I tell you—swimming down there! Flat up to the sky.

"Phil!" cried Boris, and he was at Jeyna's side, looking down.

The suddenness of it all and the certainty that it could not be Phil whom Jeyna had seen set Boris's heart to thumping like a kettledrum.

"No, it wasn't Phil! Not Phil!"

Boris was standing stock still, his throat beating with shock at the picture that Jeyna's words had conjured.

"Where'd you see—him? Show me *where!*"

With a hand that shook terribly, Jeyna pointed outward and downward from the boat.

Down there where the moon was laying a patina of gold across the bay, there was a rippling line of little bubbles.

Then Boris patted Jeyna's hand and laughed as he whispered reassuringly, "Just moonlight on the water, that's all! Or perhaps a barrel seal or a great fish, keel up." Boris's spine uncrinkled at the comfort of the thought. "Most likely it was that 100 horsepower five-cylinder engined halibut that swallowed my spoon this morning. Or rather, yesterday morning!"

Jeyna was still shaking. She knew that it had not been a great fish, keel up, that had terrified her.

"Boris, it *was* somebody swimming down there!" She persisted in a tense whisper. "Oh, what *can* we do?"

"Do? Why, my dear, you can go to bed! You'll go off your head completely, old girl, with all this moonlight

and the deuced wicked looking shadows from those mountains and the everlasting chirping petrels!"

And suddenly, aware of a physical exhaustion that verged on breakdown, Jeyna surprisingly said "good night" and went straight down to bed.

On his back beneath the protecting roof of the afterdeck, Billy lay wrapped in the wool blankets, for the night was cold. Billy was snoring. At first his snores had undulated softly, but little by little they had gathered power. As regular in their preliminary rhythm as a swinging pendulum, the snores now rocked through the night. They were such homely, everyday snores! Whimsically Boris thought to himself, "A gyroscope machine can make a boat rock in smooth water or steady it in rough waters, and that snoring of Billy's is one sure enough gyroscope! Steadies a little—balances a little —and there you are! Whoopee, Billy, old man! That was a dandy, all right!"

When Jeyna wakened some hours later, it was already daylight.

She sprang from her berth and looked out through the open port window. Already, secretly, with much shaking of mists from Gargantuan shoulders, and with the incessant sound of dripping green waters, the hills had crept again out of the depths of Kala's bay, to lie with their broad green faces and their unbelievable green-lidded eyes of emerald watching the *Aphoon*.

Or so Jeyna fancied.

"There you are again!" she whispered. "You old green monsters, crouching down on your paws!"

She bathed and dressed and made her way above

deck, moving carefully, trying not to disturb Aunt Linda and Irene in the neighboring staterooms.

With full dawn, a sudden shower poured down unexpectedly through shafts of white mists that temporarily obscured the rising sun. And in a moment the waters of the bay were awash with sizzling white foam. Off to the north in the lee of the shadows cast by the hills, Puffin Island stood out like a silver ship.

Rain drove over the boat in sheets of beaten silver.

The sun came out. Drops of water sparkled and twinkled and hung and dropped from rail and spar and canvas.

"It's like taking an early morning shower!" said Boris as he shook the water from his head, for throughout the sudden pelting of the Aleutian rain he had stood close by the starb'rd rail, for'ard.

Now Billy appeared, with his blankets folded over his arm. He turned his dark, anxious eyes upon Jeyna and Boris.

"Mornin'!" said Billy, and after the greetings were over, "Me get 'em coffee, now!" And before the brother and sister fairly realized that Billy was gone, the native was haling them into the dining saloon where he had a pot of fragrant coffee ready, and was ministering to their cups. Tinned cream. Half a lump of sugar for Jeyna. Three lumps for Boris, who was fond, Jeyna said, of candied coffee.

When had early morning coffee ever tasted so good before?

Down in her stateroom, meanwhile, Irene, waking, thought first of Phil Wayne. She thought of his eager,

earnest face and of his lean and wiry strength. His courage. His confidence. And his quiet, deliberate action. Always, Phil was too ready to assume the responsibilities of others! She made a swift decision. If Phil did not return to-day, early, to the *Aphoon,* she would herself take the dinghy and go out to the shore to find him. Billy could do what he liked to quell the mutiny. Use the boat hook on her! Anything! She was going, and Billy couldn't stop her!

With this intention uppermost in her mind, Irene went up on deck and waving a "good morning" to the three in the dining saloon, she stood at the rail and took a look around.

The fog had lifted after the sudden shower.

At her first glance about, Irene noted that the dinghy was gone from its moorings.

"Boris!" she cried. "Billy! Did Phil come out in the night and get the dinghy?"

At her summons both boys came rushing up. With consternation on their faces, they stood gazing out at the spot where the dinghy should have been rocking at the end of its short painter.

After that first look, without a single word, Boris rushed downstairs and was on deck again in what seemed to be a second of time. He was clad in his swimming kit. His body straight and lithe and strong with the flesh rippling over supple muscles, he sprang to the rail, balanced there, stood up, balanced again, and with arms flung high and his head back, he poised, then dived like a falcon straight down into the waters of Kala.

Breathlessly watching, the others stood silent, leaning intently at the rail.

Soon Boris's head appeared above the water. He struck out toward the cruiser from a point about two rods from the stern. He shook his head and the water sprayed away in a shower of splashing drops.

Why did Boris keep paddling about right there in that one spot? Did he think that the dinghy had foundered? There had been no storm. What could have hove her down?

But while Jeyna and Irene questioned each other, Boris's long strokes brought him up alongside the cruiser on the port. Reaching up with one arm, he grasped the rope ladder which Billy had just finished lowering, and rocking back a little with his head against the tide, Boris called out to those above:

"Point out the place where you thought you saw someone swimming, Jeyna! Billy, just where did we leave the dinghy?"

"About there, opposite the companion head!" cried Jeyna, pointing. "There!" cried Billy. "Right there we tie her!"

Boris unloosed his hold on the ladder, swung about, and was away again, submerging like a seal.

Soon he reappeared. This time, Billy had the ladder fast. Boris grasped the lowest round and hand-over-hand clambered up the side. There came a splash and a sucking sound as his feet flattened out the air under his soles as he swung over the rail and came down on the deck.

He was shivering. His teeth were chattering and his lips were blue with cold.

"The dinghy's done for!" he gasped, shivering more and more helplessly. "Some rascal has slashed her bottom through from end to end! The water's not deep right here! Two fathoms where she's lying! We could get her out, but we couldn't patch her up again in a year!"

"Oh, Boris! Who——" began Jeyna. Then her voice deepened and she cried, "You can't do anything now, dear! You'll perish from cold! The wind is dreadfully sharp in spite of the sunshine! Come! Towels and hard hand-rubbing will bring back your circulation. You're so blue!"

And Boris went on down the companion stairs with Jeyna, his face drawn and white.

And it was while they were crowding about Boris some half-hour later down in Dr. Robson's stateroom, that Phil, returning, took them by surprise.

They heard the sound of a motor sputtering lamely outside on the bay. Headlong the three youngsters raced up on deck. Someone was driving the old boat home to shore at a giddy clip.

It was good to see Phil's browned face once more! For a moment the skipper stood clinging to the rail by the gate while the sound of the departing motor dory continued to rise and fall on the air.

"Phil, old son!" shouted Boris. "Thank the Lord you're here again!"

They told Phil all about the night's mysterious happenings. Someone had slashed the dinghy. The boat was

ruined. No, they hadn't the slightest clue. Only this: Jeyna had thought she'd caught a glimpse of someone swimming along like a fish under the surface of the water. Everyone had been nervous and worried, though, last night. Perhaps Jeyna had been mistaken! But again—there was the slashed dinghy!

Phil kept moving about on the deck. He said, "Is that all?" Flushing with anger, he stood and looked down at the spot where the dinghy lay under two fathoms of water.

"And all the time, Phil has worse news to spill!" thought Irene. She observed the lines from Phil's nose to his chin actually growing deeper while she looked at him. A wan gray overspread Phil's features like a mask of trouble-made-visible.

"Well," Phil began slowly, "there's the girl, Judith, just as Karazoff said." The group moved away up to the dining saloon, where they crowded about the table, their eyes on Phil's face as he dropped to the wall bench and leaned against the green cushions. "There's Judith's serving woman, whose name is Tigil. And there's the Aleut native, Chak, or Wuchak, the fisherman. He came home last night from the greenling fishing. I helped him unload his catch. Slept in his cabin all night, too, after I let the bonfire die down. Chak's accounted for. He didn't leave the cabin. I can vouch for that!"

Irene and Jeyna and Boris sat straight up, taking in every word of Phil's.

"There's a path or trail leading up through the moss to Crageagles," went on Phil. "Crageagles is a great

old place! Three rambling cabins, that's all! Karazoff's rooms are off to the north. His study's like a ship's cabin. His books are there, all over the walls on ships' shelves. Wrecked ships, you know! And his instruments are there, too, and a great sea chest and globes and maps. But it's a hole, if you ask me! Though it's tidy enough. Tobacco! After one whiff, you'd walk a mile to clear your lungs!

"Then there are Tigil's quarters in the middle section. She has a little sleeping room. The kitchen's her bailiwick, of course! To the south is Judith's wing. Her living room is a cheery comfortable kind of place, though I just stood on the outside looking in. Judy says Karazoff planned the house."

The swift thought came to Irene: *"Judy!* Already . . .!"

She saw that Phil was working out of his daze. She wouldn't interrupt him—just yet! But she had so many questions on the tip of her tongue!

There came a pause.

"What about Tigil?" Jeyna ventured at length—just the query Irene had contemplated!

Phil shouted at the question. "You mean—could she *swim?* Could she slash the dinghy? She could not. She's typical Eskimo, and you know how the Eskimo takes to swimming! Tigil has an urge to go back to the Yukon. Karazoff sent her son, Luk, back there about a year ago, or a little more. Now Tigil mutters around all day in pigeon English. She wants to go back to the Yukon for her daily gossip. And she misses Luk. She said to me, 'I go back to the tundra.' "

"Did you tell them about Karazoff?" As she asked the question, Aunt Linda's kind brown eyes were deep with sympathy for the little Judith of the island. How could Phil have gone ashore without telling Judith?

Phil nodded.

"Yes, I told her," said he easily. "She really doesn't believe a word of it. Doesn't believe that Karazoff went over the side, I mean. She laughed. Said we'd hear from Karazoff later."

"Perhaps we did—last night!" murmured Jeyna.

"The dinghy business? I hardly think so. Judith has noticed a lot of unusual happenings lately. She was telling me this morning at breakfast. She thinks that there are strangers here on Kala. Folks besides us. We've got to help her ferret out the mystery."

Still the skipper's tone was flat and his eyes were worried. He sat against the table, his knees braced against the edge.

"I suppose I must tell you the rest, too," he was saying. Aunt Linda nodded. Dr. Robson polished his glasses. "We've struck more snags. This one—well, it makes the peak of Kala look like a nine-pin! Kala has struck to kill, I'd say!

"After I'd given Crageagles the once over this morning, after we'd had coffee in Karazoff's 'study,' and after I'd gabbled Chinook jargon with Tigil, and had told Judy that we expected her to pack her lapis lazuli and her nuggets and put her seagull and her dog and her tame weasel in their cages, preparatory to beginning her cruise with us, I asked her where we'd find the gasoline tanks Karazoff wrote about in his Journals—

the gas, you know, he'd promised we could load up with after he almost drained the tanks getting us down here off course."

Phil waited a moment as if he were hunting for the next word. But he couldn't find any words to soften the blow for the others. The thing that had happened couldn't be softened in the telling.

Boris's restless heels kicked off on the rungs of his chair the interval of silence.

"It appears," came Phil's low monotone, "the evening we stood into the harbor of Kala, some uncanny demon or other emptied every cask of gasoline on the island. Chak had it all stored away in one of the caves behind the cabins. It's gone. Every drop!"

"Drained off onto the ground?" demanded Boris.

Phil shook his head.

"No. That's the queer part of it. We couldn't find any indication that the miscreant had just opened the tank and let the fluid drain out. Someone *stole* the gasoline. Must have made a lot of trips back and forth in the night or in the early morning. Perhaps the fellow even took two or three nights for the job. Judy remembers especially being awakened by some unusual disturbance outside the cabin perhaps a week ago. There's someone on Kala now. Someone who doesn't want to be seen. Judy and I are sure of that!"

"Judy and I! Judy and I!" Irene's very heart took the phrase and held it and rang it like a chime of little tinkling bells—*"Judy and I!"*

While they were taking in the meaning of Phil's dis-

closure, Phil threw out his hands and said in a strangely harsh young voice:

"That means that we've only just enough gas left to keep moving back and forth from our anchorage to shore for a week or so. No longer. Besides the gas that we have now in our tanks, there isn't, so far as Chak or Judy knows, a drop of gas within two hundred miles. We're here, till God knows when, on Kala!"

After a while Boris said, "Couldn't we make the next island north in the Aleut's bidarka?"

Phil shook his head.

"There's no fishing station—no cod fishing station, that is—for hundreds of miles. The natives may have summer camps on Ongoo. Nothing more. The chances would be all against us, though. Even a motor dory would be up against trouble in a storm. We may have to make a try for it, though, that way. But first, we'd better find the fellow who stole the gas. He's got gas enough, and he must have a boat. Perhaps several boats."

Phil's hands clenched almost convulsively. The others stared at the skipper. The sound of his words came rolling back upon their understanding like the wash of waters in the wake of the cruiser when the tide was making and the boat was running her easting or her westing down on the North Pacific or the Bering Sea.

They strove to analyze and weigh. And the thought came to each of them, *"We may have to spend the winter here on Kala! We—may—have—to—spend—the—winter—here—on—Kala!"*

CHAPTER X

STROGO

FOR days the boys searched the island of Kala for traces of the miscreant who had rifled the gas tanks and slashed the dinghy, but so far their efforts had been fruitless.

To-day they had all dedicated to frivolity. It was Judy's birthday and Irene had planned a dinner ashore in honor of the occasion.

They all liked Judy. She was shy. But how pretty she was—in her Russian blouse of green Jersey with her saucy green béret and her high-topped boots of sealskin! How light and clear her laugh! How deep and quiet and blue her eyes! And how the light shone in her golden-brown hair!

They all liked her daring and her quiet wisdom about the island ways of birds and fish and growing things that had their roots in the soil—shrubs and berries and flowers and mosses. Yes, and volcanoes, too!

Aunt Linda loved Judy. She had taken the girl under her special protection and the two spent long hours studying or visiting together down in Aunt Linda's stateroom.

"Just cricket!" thought Phil now as he observed

Judy departing for the shore in the duck-boat. She was bound for Crageagles and the watercress pool for the "makings" for salad for the birthday dinner.

"No," Irene had declared. "We can't use the bacon for the main supper. Of course we ought by rights—picnic rights—to have just bacon and the other regular camp 'eats.' But in spite of Shansii and his crew, bacon is going to be worth its weight in gold before we—we say good-bye to Kala! So—you can't guess what we're to have, instead!"

"Fish! Fish! Fish!" came a chorus of voices—Jeyna's contralto and Boris's tenor and Phil's bass.

"Good guess! Part of our dinner is swimming around now out there in the bay," cried Irene. "Karazoff's old Journals say that the waters are simply swarming with an incredible number of good eating fish. They're so easily caught, he says, that they can be jigged up with no other bait than a bit of bright metal on a hook. Who wants to go fishing with me?"

"I'll go!" as he spoke, Boris looked up from his task of pounding Hungarian nails in the soles and heels of his Nome loggers' boots. At the beginning of the cruise he had planned to make use of this unique footgear in the exploration of the Mendenhall glacier. Now the boots would have their initiation on the Kala trails. "Wait a jiff!" Boris urged. "I'll be ready shortly. You have the right idea, Irene! We must live off the country if we're going to make our supplies stretch as far as they will *have* to stretch if we stay here this winter!"

Within a few moments Irene and Boris were out on the bay in the old dory which yesterday Phil had found

hidden in a cove. Here a little stream had entered the bay just north of Puffin Island. Along the shoreward edge of the beach at this spot there had been a loose strewing of logs, stumps, and drift, that had probably come over the bar of the Whale Gates in last winter's storms. Currents had beached the drift here far above the present water line. And covered with this drift, the old dory had lain in a bed of damp sand.

"Take it and welcome!" Judy had said when they asked her about their "find." "I've never seen it before. It doesn't belong to anyone at Crageagles!"

Now as he rowed the old boat, Boris's eyes were seeking out the trail up the hillside, there where a flitting shape was Judy climbing the path to the cabins.

"Boris is certainly smitten!" thought Irene.

Irene sat on the low seat in the stern of the dory, trailing her fishing-line with its clam-shell hook—a prize kit that Judy had this morning given her. A twist of Irene's wrist and the shell would glitter and flash in the bright water. Hardly had the hook turned and twisted in the flood when there came a stout pull and a jerking on the line. Irene pulled in. "Gaff him! Gaff him!" she cried, struggling to disentangle her feet from the line, which had become twisted about her ankles. She hauled in her prize—a splendid whitefish!

"My word!" shouted Boris. "Don't upset the tub! I'll wager this is your first time with that kind of fish!"

"Don't upset the tub yourself!" retorted Irene. "And what if it *is* my first time for a four- or five-pound whitefish? This is a perfectly good fish, isn't it?"

"I'll say it is!" Boris was removing the hook from

the mouth of the prize. He gave the whitefish a little whack on the head and threw him into the bows. "You won't need to take another. That's a whopping beauty!" Boris dangled the fish, reaching out for it and lifting it high again for Irene to observe.

And a little later the two were on deck the *Aphoon* once more. Irene was getting ready the supper for the shore party. She wore an enveloping gingham apron of blue and white and a white dress with deep plaited skirt and a sailor collar and plaited blouse. Irene's cheeks were pink. Her eyes sparkled with pleasure as she checked on her fingers the items of the recipe that she was to follow.

"Whitefish with shrimp sauce!" she whispered as she set out her pans and kettles and searched in a drawer for the sharp knives and the silver cooking fork.

"Hmm-m-m! *One pound of whitefish cooked until tender. Salt the water slightly. Add* (what we have just two more *of*) *lemon. And* (thank goodness, we have a lot of the next ingredient!) *onions! Boil gently. Drain and cool and beat it fine with a fork, then put it through a coarse sieve. Cream the flaked fish.* Yes'm! *And mix the flakes with the unbeaten whites of two or three eggs to bind. Add two spoonfuls of thick cream* (tinned) *to each cup of fish. Fry the cakes till they are gently browned. Serve hot.*

"That's that! It's a shame not to have just steaks of the fish, or broiled fish. But we're going to have so many dozen dozen meals of fish that I'm going to begin with the fixy ones so that by and by just plain fish cooked on sticks will taste *won-der-ful!*"

And in the midst of Irene's preparation of the shrimp sauce for the cakes of browned fish flakes, there was Judy signaling for Billy or *someone* to come out after her in the *Mongoose,* as they'd christened the salvaged dory when they'd been fixing up her seams yesterday.

Judy's own supply of gasoline having been reduced to nothing, Judy herself must depend upon the members of the cruise for her transportation to and from the cruiser. Of course, Boris was the self-nominated ferryman for Judy. But right now Phil and Boris were far out on the cliffs above the South Whale, stalking along the trails, searching again.

Boris had taken Judy's bolas, a simple native contrivance, just six strings and six weights of stone and a red feather to show where the missile landed. Boris had planned to become expert in the use of every native device for the taking of wild ducks and wild geese and even of the sea parrots. You never knew when you might have to depend on sea parrot soup! And for the taking of sea parrots Judy had said that the bolas might be used when you hadn't any gun or any shells.

Of course there were firearms among the members of the cruise, but there weren't many rounds of ammunition. What there were, the owners must conserve—for emergencies.

Irene helped Judy arrange the watercress in a basket. Judy had brought over, too, four little glasses of some jelly made from the fruit of the dwarf huckleberry. Together the two girls planned happily the order of the day. They would make the coffee in the galley coffeepot. They would fry the cakes in the larger skillet.

They'd take bacon—just a little bacon—and have one bacon cabob apiece for dessert!

They would all be very gay and they would forget everything that was mysterious and puzzling and they'd just eat and sit about and talk a little—and perhaps—after they came back to the *Aphoon*—dance a little!

"Yes," Irene smiled a rueful little smile as she thought, "and every minute, we'll be wondering whether the—the marauder is going to make us another visit to-night!"

Billy and Dr. Robson and Aunt Linda were to remain on board ship.

At four o'clock the others went ashore in the *Mongoose*. They walked leisurely along the south trails. They crossed the Bogwaddies on Judy's old trail, stepping or jumping from niggerhead to niggerhead. They climbed the steep slope over the ridge of the South Whale and they built their campfire on the ledge of the cliffs just beyond the old wreck of the *Seahorse*.

About them everywhere the seagulls wheeled and cried. Sea parrots in a horde and crested auklets took off from the ledges like thousands of tiny dark airplanes and careened and zoomed and fell through the air and rose and swooped down again. Just south of the campfire site lay a ridge of volcanic stones rounded and seaworn like pebbles, and down beneath the stones in crannies and fissures between the boulders they could hear the auklets chattering unseen.

High above the waters of the North Pacific the little group stood now gazing out over the barrier reefs.

It was low tide. The rocks of the barrier looked like

great walruses lifting their huge bulks high on the waters. From the reefs and the enclosed, semi-circular lagoon there lifted the smell of salt and seaweed and wet rocks.

What a tempest must once have roared in across the waters to have lodged the *Seahorse* here—high on the vast ledge!

In its day the *Seahorse* had been a monster boat. Now sides and decks had rotted away or had been used by the islanders for fuel when driftwood supplies ran low. Two horses in rearing position formed the figure-head. The horses faced the ocean. Their heads were turned a little outward and their mouths were open, showing their teeth. Shoes were on their feet. Their bodies were painted white so that they still looked like beautiful fine animals.

Every spring through the years past, Karazoff had painted them with a fresh coat of white. They had been Judy's earliest pets, forever racing yet forever still. Her steeds of the sun, of the fogs and the mists!

Did Judy know the history of the old boat? No. At least, not much of it. Kay had told her that some years ago the barkentine, manned by a crew of Russians and Chinese, had driven straight over the barrier reefs in a great gale just after the setting in of the autumn storms.

Here in the quiet waters of the lagoon the sailors had rested for a day and had refreshed themselves and then started out once more. That very night a second terrific storm had seized the boat. In the middle of the night the barkentine had been riven in two and her

for'ard parts had been lodged on this ledge. Most of the crew were lost.

Later, Kay had taken the survivors up to Dutch Harbor in his power schooner. They had paid their passage money, Kay said, in gold nuggets. The Chinese captain had said that they would return later to Kala to collect some of the bales and the chests of materials that had escaped being ruined by salt water, or had been landed high on the ledges north and south of here by the same tidal wave that had lifted the prow and the figurehead so far.

Once or twice Kay had shipped off a chest to some address sent him by the old captain. A pirate captain of a captured vessel, Kay surmised. No. So far as Judy knew, the men had never returned to Kala.

Piecemeal, Judy told the tale while they were spreading the cloth on the top of the flat rock they called the "table." They weighted down the cloth with pieces of drift. They found their places about the table.

Judy and Boris sat side by side. Judy's cheeks, flushed with color, her eyes, alight and happy with excitement, made the girl a lovely picture against the gray cliffs and the green waters and the cutting shadows of bright wings of gulls and the dark wings of sea parrots and auklets.

Jeyna sat on a boulder next to Phil, her tweed coat with the collar of silver fox drawn about her shoulders though the afternoon had been warm and the evening brought no chill. She told herself that she really didn't mind at all Boris's being so crazy about Judith Ivanoff!

Phil and Irene had tended the fire and boiled the

coffee and fried the cakes to a delicious brown and arranged them on the plates, ladling out deep spoonfuls of the delicious shrimp sauce, too.

And with the first taste of the fish, with the first bite of that most appetizing watercress salad, and the first quaffings of the picnic coffee, the five became gay and animated and everyone looked happier!

Their appetites were amazing. After the cakes, they roasted each his bacon cabob on willow sticks that Billy had whittled for the purpose. They had an omelet which Irene flopped expertly in the small skillet. And Jeyna served the coffee for the second, or was it the third time, and they were all tremendously friendly and at peace with the world.

After the picnic Irene began to clear the cloth, and Judy, with an outward, eager gesture of her slender brown hands, urged them to come with her while she showed them her tame sea lion, Strogo, over in the Sea Lion Pool, just down the ridge trail a little way, below the cliffs of the South Whale.

So they piled the dishes into the baskets again, and left the edible remains of the feast spread temptingly on the rock shelves for the hungry gulls and sea parrots and auklets.

Down the west slope of the South Whale they wound. They followed a trail that a big brown bear had made, Judy said, years and years ago. Down through the mosses and between the willows where little streams ran white!

Fogs were lifting. Fogs were settling. Fogs actually walked and stalked down the valleys. The air was heavy

with the smell of the salt sea. It bore a faint fragrance of wood smoke and the smoke of burning mosses from their quenched campfire.

Phil's eyes were searching every hill slope. He stopped once or twice in the trail, and, taking out his Zeiss glasses from the case that was slung by a strap over his shoulders, he studied some ridge or some cairn of boulders. He wondered whether the marauder was abroad this evening. Like fairy ranges, green and rose-colored and gray, the ridges of Kala hung shadowy and ethereal above white gorges full of mists.

Judy was ahead of everyone else. She led the line. Her bright hair danced in the light just as Judy seemed to dance down the trails.

"It was a nice birthday party!" Judy thought to herself. "I'm seventeen years old now."

She wished that Kay had been there to enjoy the birthday party with her. Phil Wayne had said that Kay was very ill and that he had gone away and was never coming again to Kala. He had gone over the side of the *Aphoon* into the—the eternity of waters.

Judy thought otherwise. Night after night she had lain awake thinking it out. Yes, Kay was ill. Kay knew Judith Ivanoff as no one else in the world would ever know her. Kay knew that if he returned ill to Kala—perhaps to live for years an invalid—he could never persuade Judy to leave him, to go "outside" on the Nome liner from Dutch Harbor to seek the "book learning" he insisted she must have.

So Kay had taken the roundabout way. He would give Judy her chance to go. Conscience-free, she could

leave Kala. By and by, long after Judy had gone, Kay would come back again to take care of himself in his illness—alone on Kala!

Well, when Kay came back, he would find Judy Ivanoff still here, waiting to scold him! He'd find a fire on the hearth at Crageagles, and a new goose-wing pipe, and Ilak on the hearth-rug and Sun-up-sun, and Kraaa and Skurrr, and, in season, Toma and Jutaa—all waiting!

Judy decided things quickly, like that. She wouldn't go out on the *Aphoon*—if the *Aphoon* by some miracle got away this fall. Judy Ivanoff was going to stay at Crageagles!

The picnickers clambered over a slippery ridge of volcanic rock—pumice stone damp with mists—and came out under the spray from a roaring river that burst out from the very depths of the Kala hills. A subterranean stream, Judy told them. It had its source, probably, in the glaciers that poured down the slopes of the hills farther toward the south. For miles this underground stream must traverse subterranean labyrinths before it found passageway here. With a sudden mighty thundering of waters the stream poured down a wall below the vast opening which furnished a vent for the floods.

Under the wall the loosened waters spread into a great amphitheater where, as if in a jasper bowl, the rocks caught and held the torrents of white water.

Here at a gesture of command from Judy the four others lined up along the northerly edge of the pool and Boris, putting his hands on his knees, stooped down

to peer into the green waters, where the sunset was pouring a surface wash of rose and silver lights across the lake.

"You'll have to stand back farther yet," Judy commanded them again. " 'Way back beyond that ridge!"

Then, as if quite oblivious of their presence, she moved along the border of the pool. Suddenly she, too, leaned down from a slab of smooth pumice rock and peered into the water. "It's odd!" she cried. "I can't see Strogo anywhere! Usually he comes before I call him! I'm going in to find him; If anything has happened to Strogo . . ."

"You're not going into that water! The shock will kill you!" almost angrily Boris protested. Judy just looked up at him and nodded and shook her curls. Boris appealed to Irene. "Don't let her! Phil and I know what these waters are like! Darned cold, if you ask us!"

"How wonderful to be so—so cherished!" sighed Jeyna, her eyes clouded as she observed Judy.

"Dip your hand into the lake, Boris, old man!" cried Phil.

Boris stooped down and swept up a handful of water.

"Well, I'll be switched!" he drawled slowly, a look of surprise on his clean-cut face. "It *is* warmish, isn't it? Not too warm, or Strogo might not like it! There's nothing like having a volcano right in your front yard to heat the water pipes!" Boris began to fidget. "Where's Judy!"

"Coming right now!" called out a clear voice. There was Judy just rounding a boulder which, she said, hid

her dressing room. Under a ledge behind the boulder she kept her swimming kit. Judy had changed from her green Jersey to a one-piece suit of grayish-yellow hair-seal over light flannel. She clambered up Take-off Rock.

Heels on the edge of the rock, she poised there. She flung back head and arms and swung out like a golden swan, and dropped, cleaving the water noiselessly as she cut through the green flood.

Far out into the pool her long strokes carried her. In the pale, misty sunset her hair gleamed like a helmet of gold. On the farther bank of the pool she came up to perch like a mermaid on a triangular shaped rock that jutted up from the depths like the dome of some submerged temple.

She called out in low tones, gently at first, then in deep crescendo:

"*Whoo-eeee! Whoo-eeee! Whoo-eeee!*"

"Why," thought Aunt Linda, down in the harbor on the deck of the cruiser, "that's Judy calling! I recall now, she told me that she calls her sea lion so! The young folks must be up there at the Sea Lion Pool!"

Judy slid down from her rock and submerged once more. No glimpse of her could they catch though they searched the face of the lake everywhere.

Up at their feet something rippled in the water. A wave came rolling, then another wave. There came a washing and a boiling of white suds in the shallows. And quite suddenly a sleek and dripping sea lion took shape before their astonished eyes.

Had the creature been created out of the mists and the waters?

And there again was Judy, laughing as she came to the surface, just after Strogo had made his landing. With the black bulk of the hills behind her, and beside her that wavering black creature of the twilight, the sea lion, Judy might have been a mermaid in an old woodcut—a sailor's dream of a Lorelei! Why didn't she sing now—

"Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten . . ."?

The picture was extraordinary, all black and white and twilight gray and silver, and Judy's golden head topping that slender exquisite body as she stood now, poised on the pumice slab in front of her companions.

Then Judy turned and fished about and dragged from the water a net that had been drifting from its anchor rock by ropes that gave it drift space but still held it securely fast. One end of the net was shirred over rawhide. Judy loosed the drawstring and dipping inside with her right hand drew out a wriggling fish.

"I brought Strogo's supper up this afternoon," she told the four who were crowding about her, laughing and exclaiming in their eagerness to observe Judy and her sea lion.

Judy bent from the waist and wagged a slender forefinger at Strogo.

"Speak!" she commanded him. "Speak, Strogo!"

"Oogouuch!" barked Strogo. *"Ooogouuch! Oogouuch!"*

Judy rewarded him with a fish.

"Oh, I say, that's great! Great!"

In his enthusiasm Boris would have leaped over the low rock barrier that separated the pumice platform

from the round boulders where the observers had found seats after Judy last warned them back from the sidelines.

Jeyna clutched at Boris's arm. "Don't you dare to disturb them!" she commanded her brother. But Boris eluded Jeyna's grasp and sprang over the barrier to stand at Judy's side.

"Really, Irene," whispered the excited Jeyna to her chum, "I half expect to see an 'arm clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful' lift a gleaming sword from the lake!"

Irene hardly heard. "There!" she cried. "Strogo gobbled another fish. That's six, already!"

The sea lion was sleek and beautiful. He looked almost like a brown dog. And when, apparently winded from the exercise of barking and turning somersaults at Judy's command, and from the tantalizing thrill of dangled fish and mussels, Strogo opened his mouth, he would sway mysteriously back and forth in a strange weaving motion. That weaving, swaying, stirring movement of seal and sea lion so like the drifting reach of sea weeds and kelp under the surface of the waters! Indescribable!

Then Judy called out a word the others could not understand. High up out of reach she dangled the last fish from the net. Like a lithe brown serpent the sea creature whirled over and careened in a somersault to land, panting and weary, braced on his right-angled wrists. His mouth was open. His jaws were agape. He begged for more fish.

Judy gave a sharp, clear whistle and the sea lion,

with a last, almost wistful backward look, moved forward and plunged into the shallows, then submerged his body in the depths where Judy had first dived down. His wide, doggish face showed above the dark water as he gazed at them with his dim, near-sighted eyes.

"He'll get used to you gradually," Judy said, a little later, after she had changed to her trail clothes and had rejoined the group. "He'll get used to you—just as—just as I am doing! Two years ago, Kay brought him to me from Ongoo. He was a baby then. I carried him under my arm. Sometimes when the tide is low out there on the bay of Kala, Strogo will follow me along the shore. Yes, it *did* take days of patience and tons of fish to train him. Mostly patience, though!"

"No," went on Judy in reply to a question from Phil, "there aren't many sea lions about Kala. Out on Angka you find the mothers and the babies playing in the tide puddles. Out there, too, are the big sea lions. Those big fellows are really dangerous. They will rush you, and you have to jump lively! They move swiftly when they once get started. And how they do snuffle and bark!"

"A full-grown sea lion will bite off a man's arm in a rage if he gets the chance," meditated Boris aloud. "I'd not want to be too chummy with Strogo, even! Supposing a sea lion went mad like a tame wolf or a tame little tiger and suddenly began to claw and bite. Off would go your hand or your arm, and that would be that!"

Judy said that she would never be afraid of Strogo. He was such a modest, mild-mannered sea lion! She

had found him to-day in a deep pool the other side of the rock turret. Here Judy's face grew suddenly grave. "I really believe that someone had been scaring Strogo just recently," said she. "He almost always comes when I call. This afternoon, though, I found him simply *cowering* behind the rocks along the south shore. You boys didn't find any traces of that prowler, did you, when you went exploring after lunch?"

"No," began Phil, "we didn't. We searched——"

And then Phil's voice broke off. A second later he gasped out, "What's that?"

The five stopped stock still in the trail and listened.

From down the narrow valley that debouched on the bay near the old wharves, lifted now the high clear note of the kelp horn which, this very morning, Billy had fastened by a rope to an old mast erected by the ferry landing, as a signal for those who wished to be ferried out to the *Aphoon.*

"It's the kelp horn!" shouted Boris. "Old Billy was standing watch! He needs us! That's the signal!"

"It can't be Billy!" objected Phil. "How could he get ashore? We have the little boats!"

"The kelp horn! The kelp horn!" Someone kept repeating the phrase. This morning they had simply doted on that inspiration of Billy's. "Like horns of elfland faintly blowing!" Irene had quoted gayly at the first sound of the horn. And now—this!

Fear nipping at their heels, they came racing down the trail to the landing. The cruiser was lighted. From every porthole window the lights gleamed. On the afterdeck the swinging lantern shed a white radiance.

With a shout of warning Phil hurled himself down the trail ahead of the others.

"Wait! Keep your eyes open, but don't come across in the dory till I call you!" he commanded. He skulled himself swiftly over the bay in the collapsible duck-boat. He came up alongside the cruiser, made fast the boat and swarmed up the ladder. In the bright late twilight they could follow his movements as he made his way like a shadow along the deck toward the companion-way. Then the shadow disappeared.

Shortly afterward, they heard Phil's shout summoning them. Still and white, they found their way to the old dory, and it was not until Boris had shoved off that Irene noted the absence of Judy. When had Judy left them? Not even Boris could tell.

Phil met them as they lined up on deck a few moments later.

"It's pretty bad," he said. "No, Irene, don't worry!" as the girl made a sudden step forward and then leaned back against Jeyna, whose arm went about her in a sudden tightening. "Your father's as right as rain. But Billy's gone! There's not a sign of him anywhere. Not a note, either. I've looked everywhere and he's not on board. Otherwise, nothing's different!"

They heard him in silence. Then Boris turned and was over the boatside in a flash, calling out in a low voice over his shoulder:

"Search the boat again! I'm off! I have my flashlight here, and I'll search along the shore line till I find where they landed with Billy!"

Boris was gone.

All night long he moved about the deserted shores of the harbor. Sometimes he scrambled over drift, sometimes he waded white waters. He crawled over mud banks and got a miserable crick in his neck from keeping his head down, the better to search for footprints on the shore.

In the early morning, bedraggled and spent with weariness, he returned to the *Aphoon.*

"From the North Whale to the South Whale and back again!" he said slowly when they questioned him. "Not a new track anywhere. Perhaps they took him straight up from our landing after they blew the notes on the kelp horn. There are so many footprints at the landing, we couldn't discover a new one even if it were there. And perhaps they have gone out through the Pass!"

"But we were up there on the heights in the early evening! We'd have seen if there had been a boat outside the Gates! And Judy says that the straits of Angka are one long seething whirlpool. Passage there is out of the question, even for the most skilled canoeist among the Aleuts!"

"But why take *Billy?*" demanded Boris in a sick voice as he dropped wearily on the wall seat in the dining saloon and without waiting to wash or change prepared to eat breakfast. Breakfast over, he'd hurry down to his cabin for a catnap before he started the search again. Had Dr. Robson heard anyone prowling about on the boat before Billy disappeared?

"He didn't hear a sound. Nor Aunt Linda either. Dr. Robson sat all the evening as usual reading in his

stateroom. Aunt Linda did her marathon about the deck, then went below to bed. A little later, Billy came into Dr. Robson's room and brought him some tea and toast and some of the preserves that Judy had brought him earlier in the day. About a quarter of an hour after he'd served the tea, Billy came in again to get the plates and the cups and clear up. It was twilight then. Pretty dark down below. We must have been just about ready to leave the Sea Lion Pool."

So Phil retold the tale.

They held another council. Dr. Robson, with his pipe cold and forgotten in his hand, and Aunt Linda, her brown eyes heavy with worry and anxiety. This morning, for the first time, even Aunt Linda had nothing cheerful to suggest. Irene was really worried about Aunt Linda! Irene and Jeyna sat on the long bench at the end of the table, their arms about each other's shoulders, their gay laughter hushed.

Phil reviewed the list of inexplicable happenings that had followed them on their cruise from Nome:

First, there had been Karazoff's conniving to bring them down here unawares to the most remote of the islands of the Aleutian chain. There had been the cod tongues. Karazoff's disappearance. Phil couldn't yet force himself to say "Karazoff's drowning." And after that, swiftly, the slashing of the dinghy, the draining of the gas tanks, and now, finally, Billy's disappearance.

The skipper looked at his companions. "The point is," said he, "we appear to have taken on three different sets of antagonists, or I've never seen a seagull!"

They stared at him. Boris sat up suddenly and demanded, "How's that, Skipper? *Three sets?*"

Phil tried to explain.

First there had been Karazoff. Karazoff's plan, mad though it might have appeared, had at least a very definite objective: the removal of Judy from this island of Kala; the saving of her little fortune in semi-precious stones, nuggets, all that; Judy's cruise to the States under Aunt Linda's care; her schooling; later, travel—opportunities for the study of art abroad.

But what had Karazoff's plan to do with the slashing of the dinghy?

Nothing at all, Phil thought. The destruction of the dinghy had been the work of a spiteful vandal and a coward.

It looked as if their second antagonist were someone besides the Russian Karazoff.

The draining of the gas tanks and the theft of the gasoline? The snatching away of Billy? Phil thought this to be the work of a different sort, based on a plan altogether different from Karazoff's and that of the vandal who had destroyed the dinghy.

The others agreed with Phil. Yes, certainly, there must surely be three different forces at work in opposition to the crew and the skipper, the hosts and the guests whom the *Aphoon* carried.

"Perhaps, though," suggested Jeyna, "Billy made off with himself."

For a moment Phil looked nonplussed, then a stubborn look came into his eyes again and he shook his head.

"No," said he, "I know Billy too well to think that. *I* might have gone without leaving word. Billy wouldn't."

"Besides," added Irene, settling back on the bench, "none of our boats are gone. Boris thought of that, the first thing. The duck-boat and the old dory were out there at the landing where we'd left them."

"Well, Billy's gone, anyway!" said Phil. "He couldn't have got ashore by swimming, either. Like most of the Eskimos, he dislikes the idea of a plunge into cold water. By the way," Phil went on thoughtfully, "did Judy happen to say how she learned to swim like a—a swan?"

Irene and Jeyna both started to answer him.

"Yes!" they chorused, then laughed, and Jeyna left the explanation to her companion. "Karazoff had traveled a lot," Irene said, wrinkling her forehead in a frown as she tried to think back to what Judy had really said. "For a year or so, Karazoff lived on one of the South Sea Islands. Judy explained that in the beginning he learned to swim off the beach at Waikiki. He can do *anything,* absolutely *anything* in the water, and he taught Judy, too! Years ago!"

Phil sprang excitedly from his chair, then sat down again.

"Oh, he did, did he? He can, can he?" The skipper looked more thoughtful. So Karazoff himself had taught Judy how to swim like that! To submerge like a seal, swim under water, and come up at a distance from her take-off!

Phil became suddenly more cheerful.

Then Jeyna, who had been sitting with her chin

propped in her hands, elbows on cloth, spoke up again:

"Phil, have you thought about Judy's urging us all to go over to the Sea Lion Pool to see Strogo? If we had come right back from the *Seahorse* and our picnic supper, we might have prevented all this!"

Phil rose abruptly.

"I guess that's just what has been worrying all of us," said he as he bent down and shook Boris's shoulder gently, and then without further speech helped the young Russian down to his stateroom.

CHAPTER XI

CHEN LUEN

A FEW minutes later, while Phil was making entries in his log book out on the afterdeck, Chen Luen came over the cruiser's side and dropped almost at Aunt Linda's feet as she came up the stairway from her stateroom below.

Chen Luen's bent old body was clothed in a shiny black suit with a loose coat of black silk, and, oddly enough, his feet were shod in loggers' shoes with hobnails in the soles. A very bad fashion for wear on deck!

Bowing low in an old-fashioned, elaborate manner to Aunt Linda, Chen Luen made his way toward the afterdeck where Phil was sitting observing the man's progress. Chen Luen had a yellow face. It was really as yellow as a daffodil. He had his hands drawn up into the sleeves of his coat. He moved across the deck with a slow, persistent movement. He went straight up to Phil. Again he bowed low.

"Sklipper Phil Wayne, he very pleased to see his first matey again?" queried he in his soft, almost breathless voice.

Phil stood right up and looked the man over and then he bowed in turn and said, "Yes."

"Very bad circumstance happen to matey. Short time ago?"

Again Phil nodded. Instinctively he knew that, whatever his errand, the Chinaman was very much in earnest. The man bowed again. This time, his glance included the group that had drawn near—Aunt Linda and Irene and Jeyna, too, their eyes alight with interest.

"Chen Luen glad to talk to sklipper. Glad to stay here on *Aphloon*—cook for you and make down the beds. Chen Luen plass the navy navigation tests, too, many years ago."

Boris, who had heard the sound of the new voice and who had presumably forgotten that he needed to make up sleep, now appeared behind the girls, his head topping the three who waited, facing Phil and Chen Luen.

"Navigation tests!"

Boris slid into a chair, folded his arms, and coughed slightly. Old Chen Luen, hearing the sound, turned and glanced so benignly at Boris that that young man swallowed hard and tried to pretend that he hadn't made any protest at all.

"China navy!" blandly Chen Luen explained.

Phil looked interested.

Chen Luen turned now and smiled at the group of womenfolk.

"Don't be scare of Chen Luen," said he. "Many years now, since year *Seahorse* wreck on Kala, Chen Luen has lived on Angka. Chen Luen is partner to Karazoff, the Russian. When the otter poachers, when the other fellows they come to mine the sulphur from the crater of Angka's extinct volcano, when these come,

Chen Luen just move over to Kala to wait till others quit Angka. That's all!"

"Bring maps!" commanded the old visitor, and in a minute, after one swift glance at Phil, Irene sped away to return presently with a map of the United States and Alaska. This map she spread on top of the table on the after-deck.

"'Leutian Island map, all right!" approved Chen Luen. "Here!" He bent over the map. He removed his right hand from the deep cuff of the black silk coat and pointed to the sheets spread there before him.

"Asia lies here," said he slowly, and in very plain, exact English. "Asia is a giant. See!" The yellow forefinger pointed as Chen Luen spoke. "Aleutian Islands they are the right arm from the giant's body. That arm is stealing out from the side of Asia. Here!" The finger ran a half-circle about the blue outline of the mainland of Alaska. The suave voice went on, "Pretty soon, Asia reach out hand and grab!" He pointed to the island of Attu, far to the west, where west became east off the coast of Asia. "Reach out hand and let down airplane station just east of Attu—here!" The moving finger rested on another island, farther from the Asiatic coast. "Here another, and here another!"

Now the finger rested on Angka and moved slowly across to Kala.

"Right now they plan pretty soon to build big station here on Angka. You folks better get away quick. Go fast!"

Phil's right arm shot out and his right hand grasped at the old Chinaman's shoulder, but when his hand

would have seized that shoulder, the shoulder was not there. It was just beyond Phil's reach—beyond—in the air.

"So it was you, Mr. Chen Luen——"

"Chen Luen of Shanghai," a suave voice prompted. "Yes."

"Thanks. It was you, then, Mr. Chen Luen of Shanghai, who warned us to get out of the harbor of Kala the very first morning we dropped anchor here?"

Gravely Chen Luen nodded assent.

"Why doesn't Phil tackle him for ruining the dinghy?" thought Irene. Then suddenly she knew that Phil hadn't even *thought* that Chen Luen had ruined the dinghy, or long since the skipper would have challenged the visitor on that score. No, instead of chiding the stranger, Phil really appeared to consider him a sort of—well—a sort of *ally!*

"Do you know who made off with our mate?" Phil put the question straight to Chen Luen. Chen Luen shook his head. "Guess so. Perhaps."

"And your guess?"

Chen Luen bowed low.

"Nothing what you would say—exciting. Melodramatic, no. Only this: some otter poachers come to Angka this week same day you come to Kala. On Angka they find men already there—men who come from out of Asia to mine the sulphur for gunpowder—for dyes—for who knows what! Perhaps they are Soviet people from Moscow. Perhaps from Tibet and China. Red yarn is spinning in the looms of the world. These men from Asia have their own steamer. In the night the

boat comes to take on sulphur. In the night the boat goes out again. Far out at sea the steamer unloads to a boat that goes straight back to the coast of Asia. All managed as easily as a ship is coaled from a tender. Alaska is the wonderful white woman of magic. Only America, she does not realize—United States she does not realize at all. By and by—by and by Asia will reach out her arm and her hand and snatch the woman of magic from those who do not care!"

Chen Luen paused.

"So they're digging sulphur on Angka now, and our government isn't on to the ticket. Is that it?"

Chen Luen nodded gravely.

Boris stood leaning on the back of Jeyna's chair. The boy's mouth was stern and his eyes were alight with suspicion. Phil, however, stood relaxed and at ease. He turned, and his eyes met Irene's and gazed deep into hers. The look said, "Things *will* come out all right, dear!"

"Chen Luen," Phil turned toward the visitor again, "have the poachers joined forces with the sulphur diggers over there?"

Chen Luen nodded.

"They hope to get another prize besides otters and sulphur, what?"

Again Chen Luen nodded.

"The *Aphoon?*"

"You have guessed right!"

"And their leader?"

"The man Orca Pougher for the otter poachers. The young Russian Simborski for the sulphur miners. That

is all I know at present. It is difficult to find out things. It is dangerous to venture over on Angka now, but I will go."

"You know, Chen Luen," Phil said slowly, "we can't get away from Kala now, much as we'd like to!"

Chen Luen looked puzzled.

"You do not wish to go?"

There was a world of irony in Phil's tone.

"No. Quite the contrary. We *can't* go. The night we came, someone deliberately emptied every single gas tank on the island. Karazoff, as you knew, of course, had gallons stored away in the special cave where he kept the supplies for the boats."

Chen Luen said, "I know."

Something deadly had come into the face of Chen Luen as he pondered Phil's words. His face sharpened with anger. And then, swiftly, his features relaxed in the smile he had first worn, and again Chen Luen bowed.

"I dare say! I dare say! They would do that!" So Chen Luen spoke, and Irene thought, "He's furious. Fairly bursting with rage. As much at a loss as we are!"

"It is hard to find evildoers down here among the Aleutians," now came the visitor's voice in that careful wording they were henceforth to think of as Chen Luen's habitual speech. Since he had accepted the members of the cruise he had dropped the vernacular that he had occasionally assumed in the beginning of the interview. "The United States Government has granted certain rights to foreigners," said he. "The right to lease islands for the fox-farming. The right to lease

islands and establish sulphur mines—to open up mines in the craters of a score of extinct volcanoes on islands from Attu to Unalaska. The right to equip and man private boats to ply between hidden harbors and the ports of Europe and Asia. Now, too, Karazoff and I have our own plans. What those plans are I cannot now tell you. Karazoff tarries away too long. He was to have come back—according to agreement—days ago. I watched for him. I sat guard all day on the hills, waiting."

Phil started to speak, but Chen Luen's gesture interrupted.

"It is after all better that I do not come to stay with you on the cruiser here. Perhaps to-morrow I will return to tell you about the way to Angka. If Karazoff were here, I should not hesitate. The secret is his as well as mine. To preserve that secret, I have never disclosed myself to Judith Ivanoff. She could not be put off. She would demand to know the way to Angka. For years we have kept the knowledge from her. She is too daring."

And suddenly as he had come Chen Luen was gone again. He was over the side and down the ladder and was making for shore in a little kayak that fairly hurtled its way across the waters toward the wharves. When they looked a little later, the kayak and the kayaker Chinaman had disappeared.

"Magic? No. He's probably living in one of the deserted buildings of the cod-fishing station," said Phil. "There must be a score of cottages or shacks and at least ten of the station buildings proper. I'm not going

to worry about where Chen Luen stays. He's all right. But I *am* going to hunt for that route to Angka. If it didn't sound loony, I'd say that it was a land route, too!"

"He didn't make us promise *not* to hunt for the trail ourselves," argued Boris. "What d'you say to our taking a look to-morrow at the old Caves of the Whalers? That's about the only direction we've avoided."

"Good idea!" said Phil. "We'll do it!"

When later in the day Irene told Judy where the boys were planning to go, Judy shuddered and her golden-brown curls bobbed in the sunlight as she shook her head in disapproval. "The *Caves of the Whalers!*" whispered the Russian girl. "Never go there!"

She smiled ruefully.

"It is—I have heard—dreadful—that place! With the old Aleut mummies swinging in the wind—everything ghostly!"

"Aleut mummies! On Kala?" Jeyna's tone was plainly incredulous, and a shade, just a shade, superior, as it was so likely to be when Jeyna was talking to Judy. "Are you certain? How did you find out?"

"I saw them once!" said Judy soberly. "You know Kay is just *dippy* about the history of the islands—the old customs and the folklore. Well, he had Chak and Tigil working for months, one year, making new sealskin sacks for the old mummy cases that swung by rawhide from the wooden racks in the innermost Caves of the Whalers, where I have never gone after that first time. The air on the islands is—Kay says—pre-pre*serva*tive. Things last here, even mummies!"

"We're fortunate indeed to find a cave unrifled on Kala," said Dr. Robson, who, broad-shouldered and upright in figure, leaned against the boat's rail, listening with deep interest to the girl's résumé of some of the facts in the history of the island. "The museums and the ethnological societies have just about stripped the Aleutian islands of these ancient relics. Perhaps the fact that the caves are on the western coast and that the trails over the ridges are difficult to follow has hitherto protected these special caves."

"But would the Aleut natives allow their funerary caves to be rifled?" persisted Jeyna. "I thought that burial places were the last spots in the world that uncivilized peoples would suffer to be desecrated."

"A good objection," agreed Dr. Robson, "but one not valid here. You see, the first missionaries persuaded the islanders that their ancestors were pagans, and that their mummies therefore, logically enough, were *heathen*. To these proselyted Aleuts, the looting of the ancestral caves by the ethnologists was not at all an act of vandalism, you see, nor did the natives attach any reprobation to the men who desecrated their caves."

We'll tell the wise
That under the sun
All men are alike,
And all nations one!

The quotation came drifting through Irene's mind. What did the words mean?

And ye shall be one people!

Who had said that? Did the sayer mean that the Aleut natives and Irene's own Eskimo friends on the Yukon were *one—one* with the complex, exotic Jeyna, one with the forthright, frivolous, enthusiastic, and melancholy, bewildering Boris? One with Ogalok, or Billy, Phil's first mate on the *Aphoon?* Did it mean that *Phil* was one with Chak and Chen Luen?

Irene sat very still on the little platform where the dinghy had once swung free from its davits. She lost herself in thinking of that word: *"We'll tell the wise that under the sun all men are alike and all nations one."* And again—*"And ye shall be one people!"*

Did those words mean anything? Did they mean nothing? Irene recalled the slight, oh, the very polite slight tinge of superiority in Jeyna's voice when she spoke to Judy. Didn't Jeyna's tone mean: "You, Judy, have lived alone here on the island of Kala with Skurrr and Kraaa and the sea birds, and you are not one of *us!* To be sure, you're studying every day with Aunt Linda just how to sit down and stand properly, and how to speak crisply and exactly, as I do. But you and I—Judith Ivanoff and Jeyna Asche are *not* one!"

Then what *did* those words mean?

For the time being, Irene gave it up and went down to the galley to make a sea-moss pudding for to-night's dinner. A salty, sea-smelling, sea-moss pudding. With that pudding they'd have, too, Russian Zabouska—some small salted herrings—and then some waffles, heavenly waffles with cream mushroom sauce poured over them. She would go now to the old dress house where Karazoff had mushrooms growing all the year round.

Off with philosophy and on with the skillets and the herrings!

After she'd gathered the mushrooms, she'd go up a little distance through the meadows and gather some of the wild rhubarb for sauce to-morrow. The wild rhubarb harvest was now at its height—thanks be!

Irene went to find her father, who would row her ashore in the ancient dory. The two boys had the duck-boat. They wouldn't be home till dinner time.

CHAPTER XII

THE CAVES OF THE WHALES

CHAK, the Aleut fisherman, motioned to Phil to follow close behind him. Along the southern wall of the hanging valley, over on the Bering Sea side of Kala, the ancient of days moved onward. It was full dawn now of the second day following Chen Luen's visit to the *Aphoon*. All day yesterday Phil had stuck to the boat, hoping that the Chinese sailor would come again as he had promised to do; but no Chen Luen came to reward Phil's waiting.

Far out on the Bering Sea, now, the spinners of the dawn flung out their strands of orange and gold and purple. The rocks everywhere were black with auklets and sea parrots. The air was a smother of the wings of seagulls that made alternate flickerings of light and shadow against the walls of Kala.

Just beyond their trail the precipices dropped straight down to the sea. And Phil, pausing a moment, stared into the depths and wished that he hadn't come. He sidled along the trail again and looked down once more. . . . A sheer drop there! Perhaps three hundred feet!

From a clump of willows that had caught foothold in a moist cranny of basalt rocks, there burst out an exquisite trilling song.

"The Siberian ruby-throat!" thought Phil. "Here! On Kala!"

Rhythmically, far below, the tides drew in their breath, wet and cold with eternity and the beginning and the end of all men—in the sea.

Suddenly Chak turned and faced Phil.

"Me born on Kala," said he. "Go with fadder bimeby hunt the sea otter. Many Aleut here then. Six or seven bidarka go hunt together. Sometime they not all come back. Hunters get losted in the tide-rip, or out in roll and wash of ocean. Long time Wuchak catch the many sea otter. Mebbe twenty sea otter. . . . Now not go hunt at all. Aleut hunters—those great mens—they all dead. Sea otters they mos' gone now. Chak tired old man now. Go hunt the whales off Ongoo to-morrow mebbe. Not come back here to Kala any more. Not come back. Ongoo many sleeps from here. Chak not come back."

Then Chak turned away again and moved on.

Phil, looking down now, noted a small sickle-shaped sand-spit that swung out sharply against the green and white waters far below. All about the sand-spit he could see the golden wash of the shoal sands.

Then the two turned a corner in the trail, and with a smothered cry Phil stepped back, his fingernails clutching at the rock walls, damp and mossy. He found himself standing alone now facing the opening of what appeared to be a great cavern in the face of an opposing cliff.

He stepped inside the opening of the cave. Chak had a torch lighted. He stood stooped over a little, like a

gnome, waving the torch about his head. This outer cavern was small. Phil found himself observing the structure of these walls of andesite and basalt, all worn by the damp and wet and by eroding winds.

He had but little time for observation, for Chak haled him on again. They rounded a smooth pillar and found themselves in a second cavern. Phil heard the sound of waters somewhere, but he could see no lake or stream whatever.

He knew that underground rivers are sometimes developed beneath extrusive volcanic rocks. He recalled Judy's chatter about the underground river that fed the Sea Lion Pool. Perhaps here in the Caves of the Whalers that ancient underground stream had its source. It might in turn be fed by glacier streams from a hundred tributaries in these caves, or it might be connected with the sea by subterranean passages in which the waters rose and fell with the tides outside.

"Me go to-morrow to Ongoo, sure!" said Chak again. "Tell you mos' everything before Chak go. These old whalers' caves." He held the torch aloft.

By this time Phil had fully regained his poise. Now, with a little thrill of excitement, he perceived that he was really standing just inside the entrance to an ancient Aleut burial cavern.

As his eyes became accustomed to the gloom, he became aware of a row of swinging sacks of sealskin that hung by rawhide ropes from a beam that spanned the southern end of the cavern about three feet from the low roof.

The sealskin sacks swung a little, Phil thought, with

the rhythm of the sea and the sea winds, or perhaps with the stirring of air currents—"the winds that veer and change and die away but never perish," Phil found himself quoting thus the Aleuts' own epigram.

Once in the Smithsonian, Phil, with his Uncle Ralph Wayne, had spent an awed and wondering half-hour before the cases where were displayed the Aleutian mummies. His uncle had pointed out to him the resemblance between the mummies from the Aleutian islands and those from Peru and had driven home the truth that all men are of one race everywhere.

"And here, brothers, here again you are!" suddenly Phil said grimly, whispering his greetings. In a moment Chak had straightened up. His voice, echoing through the depths of the caverns, rang out clear and strong:

"Karazoff tell me," said he; "before Americans here, the Russians were on Kala. The Russians make Aleuts all slaves. I hear my fadder's fadder tell. His fadder tell him. Long ago my fadder gone. His fadder hunt the walrus and the sea cow here. Hunt the sea otter, too. One thousand peltries every year to each native. All natives on Kala rich then. The Russians mad. The English mad. Americans mad. Kill, kill, kill—all they know is nothing but kill animals. Chak's father whale man. This island whale men's island—sacred."

A look of cunning crossed the old man's face.

"The Vey'gli spirits keep the white men off. Karazoff knows. Fishermen come to Kala. They go again. Island bad luck to all men but Chak and Karazoff.

"See!" Chak pointed to the waving sacks. "Ten

years ago, Karazoff replace the sealskin sacks. One layer over another, grass mats and bark mats he put them back again whole in new sacks, over old sacks. Old Aleut bones safe here. Karazoff and Chak keep them safe. So Chak and Karazoff they always find the plenty whale. Find the plenty seal. Find the sea otter. Even to-day Chak call the sea otter and she come again to Kala!"

Chak's voice rose in a sing-song:

"Where you think the ship the *Wild Gazelle* go down? I tell you. On Kala reefs! The *Dashing Wave* and the *Nellie Coleman* listed as lost at sea? The *Czarina* and the *Mary* and *Ida?* Shumagin Island shoals the records say. Karazoff he knows. Chak he knows, too! Chak, the son of the whalers, drive them from the Whalers' Island! Yes. They break on Kala shoals. Whale men spirits not let them ships stay here!"

Suddenly the old man lowered his voice. He put out a hand and leaned weakly against the rock wall of the cavern.

"Chak go to Ongoo. Tigil go north perhaps mebbe soon to Yukon, mebbe go soon to Yukon in oomiakpuk by and by. Karazoff's girl have these!" He waved his hand toward the sealskin sacks.

> "Dragged from their resting places
> To face a sun three million years more old!"

thought Phil, and he said to himself, "It's just as natural as the deuce! Just as natural as the sun's shining! As natural as the pyramids, and the coming in of light on old King Tut!"

And apropos of nothing at all, he said to himself a line remembered from an otherwise negligible course in Science II:

"All knowledge is good to take away ignorance and to point the way to new discoveries."

Suddenly Chak stooped down to peer into the depths of the cavern, where, on the humus, Phil noted that freshly spread sphagnum moss made the floor fairly clean.

"Chen Luen go to Angka through down there!" said the Aleut. "Chen Luen say warn you: Pougher finds the Soviet people there. Over on the far side of Angka where is the volcanoes all burned out. Pougher land right on those mens. Fights the big fight. Perhaps tomorrow, perhaps some other day, Pougher come this way here. Billy the mate, Chen Luen say tell you safe on Angka. They mebbe trade Billy for your boat. Trade him mebbe for Judy's jewels. You tell Judy to keep them jewels safe. They all safe now. Judy knows where they are. That girl knows. Now Chak go see what he can see on Angka!"

Phil grasped the old man's arm. "You can't make it! The pass is terrible! Say, if one of these caverns comes out on the cliffs above the strait of Angka, you'll fall to your death!"

"So?" said Chak slowly. "Then old Chak he find some nother way, mebbe!"

And without another word the old man was gone.

And that evening, on the wind-swept island, on the very westernmost verges of our world, Irene and Jeyna and Phil and Boris and Judy sat on shore around a fire

of moss and driftwood. They talked a little, commenting in subdued tones when Phil recounted the story of the Caves of the Whalers, or sitting silent, Boris with his arm curved about Judy's slender waist. Sometimes Judy would feel Boris's hand tremble a little as it rested on hers.

Their driftwood fire was a minute splotch of light in the over-arching sweep of darkness. Against the black shadows of the hills swathes of birds' wings, wings of gulls and petrels and other sea birds disturbed by the firelight, pressed their shadows against the dark. The night air shook with the sway of birds' crying and even the murres and the kittiwakes complained to the stars.

Intent on the firelight, Phil's eyes strayed now and then toward the shadows, for this was the kind of night when untoward events might come to pass. A kind of vague uneasiness rested upon the group.

Irene was tired. She had been sitting silent, half asleep, busy with her own thoughts, trying to follow Phil's narrative as he told them about Chak and the old whalers. Irene nursed a blister on her right thumb. She had spent the afternoon hoeing her garden on a sunny slope south of Crageagles. Here she had carrots growing and lettuce and small radishes and cabbage, though Judy had warned her that on this island cabbage never *would* "head out."

Jeyna sat leaning against Judy's ancient driftlog, her shoulders hunched a little, her eyes now and then turning toward Judy and Boris. For the first time she actually felt cross with the two. Such a silly fancy on Boris's part! A half-civilized island girl with tawny

hair and an outright gaze that Jeyna considered too *simple!*

Judy and Boris were laughing together now, and Jeyna felt so out of things that she wanted to cry! To do Jeyna justice, she had never said an unkind word to Judy, nor had she, consciously, at least, been what Irene called "superior" in her attitude. Only there were certain subtleties of spirit that "got across" from Jeyna to Judy and made each unhappy.

Phil said suddenly, apropos of nothing, unless it were an especially noisy petrel that went shrilling past, "It's just one worry after another, and yet, really, I'll bet we'll never be happier! Queer, isn't it? To feel that there's a spot in the world where something is eternally —well, just *eternal*—and I don't know what I mean by that! Tides, for one thing, and shores and winds. Foraging about for a lot of things we eat, expecting our shoes to give out the day after to-morrow at a quarter past ten—probably doomed to stay here for years—and yet—happy!"

He turned and looked at Irene as if he half expected her to agree, but Irene only looked into the green flames of the fire. Some piece of old copper ship's wire must have been burning, the flame was for a moment so gorgeous. Then the jade flame died out.

"Judy! Here's a hard smooth strip of beach. Come on, let's give 'em the dances we planned out yesterday afternoon!" Boris sprang to his feet, seized Judy's fur parka which lay beside her, and threw the cloak over his left shoulder. Then he seized a staff from the piles of driftwood they had gathered, sprang outside the

circle of the firelight and cried: "Paul Bunyan of the Aleutians! Stepping in his great boots from island to island, setting them under his feet, shouting as he goes, roaring like the hollow winds through the passes, his hair flying, wind-combed, his ragged parka wild on the breeze, the islands themselves a greenish blur as Paul Bunyan strides on!"

Everyone was awake now. Everyone applauded softly, for they truly *saw* Paul Bunyan, that famous giant, putting the islands under his two feet as he trod them down!

Then Boris's mood changed. He leaped across the little circle of beach and, stooping down, caught Judy's hands in his own.

"Come! The dance of the Eskimos at the whaling stations!"

In a moment the two were going through the pantomimic Eskimo dance, silhouetted against the firelight, their arms pointing skyward, knees flapping in and out, in a stilted kind of movement like mannikins on a string.

And then came the dance of the seabirds, and those watching caught the movement of wings, the lift and stir of pinions, and Boris with sharp cries darted—a stormy petrel—till the two flung themselves exhausted down on the beach beside the others, laughing and jesting and then springing up to do the petrel dance all over again in response to encores!

"The Russian dancers again!" Jeyna's voice wasn't a bit unfriendly. It wasn't friendly, either, only terribly far away, as if the speaker were commenting on some-

thing which she was observing through the small end of a telescope!

Boris whispered to Judy. Judy nodded, and Boris sprang to his feet again and gave Judy his hand and swung her up beside him.

"I will do the dance of the shaman!" she cried. "See! My robe is heavy with metal disks. I wear an iron shield on my head! It is bound down with thongs of rawhide." She stooped down and snatching up a handful of moss, threw it on the fire. "I dance! I whirl! There!" She threw upon the fire another handful of moss. "The yurt is small. I smother with the closeness and the smoke! I dance!"

She whirled and twirled and with her arms spread out, yet drooping as if weighted down; she did look as if she were wearing that shaman's robe weighted with heavy metal disks!

Suddenly her voice grew louder and more intense: "I see him! I see him!" she cried. "Karazoff at sea—in a tiny boat—drifting! Wings of the seabirds only can save him! Kraaa of Kala! Great Skurrr of the Eagles! Ye great eagles of Kala, save him! Kraaa comes. Wings—wings come drifting. We shall go too when the great birds come flying!"

The girl threw up her arms in a gesture of helplessness and almost tottered as Boris sprang forward. He grasped both her hands and held them and then, very gently at first, then with greater force, he shook her. "Judy, come back to me!" he cried.

As if she were awakening from sleep, Judy opened

her blue eyes wide. "How silly! Did I—did I—really—make a goose of myself?"

"Yes," said Boris briefly, "you did, young lady! And don't you dare do it again!"

"Too much excitement!" thought Phil. "The smoke and the dances, and her worry about Karazoff. I'll bet Karazoff has a shaman's kit among his Aleutian loot, and Judy has seen him imitate the old shaman so often she suddenly decided to have a try at it herself!"

Then they all laughed and chattered and pretended that they hadn't entertained chills that ran up and down their spines!

"When the great birds go flying!" murmured Phil to Jeyna. "When *do* the ducks and geese fly south again? October? Gee! If the prophetess is right, Boris and I shall have to keep right on with our building of that outrigger canoe affair that we're planning to set out in late this month. The prophetess doesn't specify. Perhaps she means when the great birds fly south again *next year!"*

"No," Jeyna's voice rang out clearly in the silence. "She said, *'when the birds come flying!'* And perhaps she didn't mean the ducks and geese at all!"

"Then what on earth did she mean?" demanded Phil. Jeyna only shook her head. "Something quite different, perhaps," she thought to herself. And for a while after that she sat there tracing on the sand wings—wings of the seagull and the puffin and the auklet—eagles' wings!

CHAPTER XIII

WILD BOAR RIDGES

AFTER breakfast the next morning Phil declared his intention of carrying up into the Wild Boar ridges above the strait of Kala his search for the mysterious marauder of the island, and his search likewise for the way—the passage—the trail—whatever it might be—to Angka.

Last night, late, the *Seahorse* had burned down to a smolder of gray ashes and blackened planks. Until late last night, long after the girls had sought their beds, they could see reflected through their port windows the flare of torches as Boris and Phil sought the miscreant who had set fire to Judy's horses of the sun, the fogs and the mists.

From the old salting house to the packing sheds, from the salt house to the old abandoned office buildings the two boys had sped. Hollow and weird through the fogs their shouts had echoed under the skies of Kala.

Then it was morning. The sun, an archer in shining armor, was launching across the sky arrow after arrow of gold, a thousand shafts of gold to quiver dangling about old Kala's head!

It was morning. At six o'clock Phil raced across the

deck of the *Aphoon* to plunge headlong into the harbor waters for his early morning swim. Then he was up the side again and down the stairs to his stateroom. Ten minutes later, dressed and impatient, he was piling onto the top of the deckhouse a coil of ship's line with a lariat-like loop at one end and a makeshift alpenstock which he had fashioned yesterday from a piece of driftwood. He had tipped the alpenstock with a piece of iron from a barrel hoop taken from an old cask down by the wharf. Across the coil of line and the alpenstock now he placed the leather case that held his fishing rod.

"I wonder whether the fellow who burned down Judy's *Seahorse* found the *pooksak* of stones and jewels?" thought Phil to himself while he waited for Boris to finish filling his fly book with Parmachene Belles and Montreals and a few brown hackles. The two boys went in to breakfast together and ate almost in silence, each intent on the plans for the day.

Phil wondered whether he ought to speak to Judy about the *pooksak* full of stones. Chak had said that Judy knew where the hoard was hidden. Unless Judy herself showed some concern for the store, Phil thought he'd better say nothing.

"This island of Kala gets my goat!" observed Boris as he was taking a last look at the fly book after breakfast. "Honestly now," Boris went on, his gaze now off beyond Phil at the rail to the mists that swirled about Puffin Island. "Honestly, if someone were to come today to offer us a lot of gasoline so that we could hoist anchors and put out of Kala Harbor for the North

Pacific, shouldn't you hate like the dickens to leave Kusko Kala without having given old Kala's bandit a punch in the nose?"

"You bet I would!" Phil agreed. "Almost ready, old man?" Phil was shouldering his coil of line.

"Ready!" Boris slapped together the covers of his fly book and stood up and flexed his right forearm as if preparing to tackle the bandit with one hand.

"Aunt Linda's putting you up the best lunch you ever ate," said Jeyna over her shoulder. She was standing just inside the dining saloon by the open window that gave on the deck. On a galley tray on the table before her was a bowl of sudsy water in which Jeyna was washing the table silver.

Irene, in a blue gingham apron, was crumbing the table. She nodded her bright head. "It certainly would be awful to go without having a—a *go* at him! You've searched all the old buildings and the Caves of the Whalers, too, haven't you, Phil?"

Phil crossed the deck to stand looking in at the window. "I'll say we've searched the old buildings! Three or four times, anyway! We've never found even a footprint except in the old timekeeper's house where Chen Luen evidently camps when he's here. Chen Luen made no secret of where he camps, either. There are packages of tea in Chinese wrappings, and funny wooden bowls of nuts, and strings of cash, all open and aboveboard. Outside, he's stored his kayak on a high frame, the way the Eskimos do. We searched every building near his two or three times. Never found so much as a footprint."

"And the old Russian brickyard?"

"That too. Now we're going up into the ridges. Yesterday evening, late, I saw something. I'd have sworn I saw something that looked like a cross between a monkey and a baboon scaling a ridge above Sea Lion Pool."

"Phil, you didn't!" Irene's tone was full of awe—and—unbelief as well.

Phil nodded. "I'd not tell you—but Boris and I'll be gone most of the day. You girls had better stick to the harbor while Boris and I climb the heights of Kala!" Phil's tone took the edge off that grandiose "heights of Kala," but neither Jeyna nor Irene failed to catch the undercurrent of concern beneath the banter.

"Let's have another look at our map of Kala, Irene," suggested Phil. "You had it last. I'd better point out our route, in case—well, in case——" And Phil let it go at that!

Irene turned away from the open window. "I'll bring the map out there!" she said.

"No, we'll come in," suggested Phil. The door opened and Phil and Boris crossed over to the table. "But I thought you boys were going fishing to-day!" Irene, on her knees before the locker under the wall seat, hauled away in the dark interior of the locker and presently drew forth a map of Kala, which the two boys had made during their first week of careful reconnaissance of the island. "That alpenstock and the coil of line—lasso—whatever it is—doesn't look much like a fishing trip to me!"

"I should say we are going fishing! Don't waste too

much time showing these gals the route!" Boris rushed away to the galley to return presently with the two bulky packages of lunch that Aunt Linda had ready. On his return he found Phil standing by the table, stooping down to scan the little map. Boris stepped to the port window. Rain or shine to-day? he wondered. Rain, probably. Kala's head flew a white banner of fog—unfailing island weather signal. After the fogs, rain!

From these windows Boris could see the North Whale and the South Whale a mile away, floating in an evanescent luminous mist like ivory whales suspended in mid-air through the magic of the northern mirage—that mirage that sometimes builds faëry palaces or modern skyscrapers, or whole fleets of ships in lonely waters where northern ships find their steading.

Phil crooked a finger at Boris. "Hi, there! Boris, c'mon and see! Here's where we're going! After we cross the marshes here, we strike up through the mosses over the meadows to Wild Boar Ridges, straight south of the harbor. Now, see!" A brown forefinger lined off the route. "We're to fish here, under the third ridge. With flies, just for the fun of it. The fish are so greedy you could catch 'em with a buttercup on a bent pin!"

"It's a peach of a stream!" agreed Boris, and Phil went on, "I'll say! And oh, boy! those salmon trout! There!" The forefinger found a whorl of red lines and stopped there. "Right here the river douses under the lava and runs underground, the way so many of these Kala streams do. Gosh! You can put your ear to the sphagnums 'most anywhere in the hills and hear water roaring somewhere underneath!"

"Here's the best stream!" Boris's forefinger crowded Phil's off the red whorls and moved on to a purple circle, and stopped.

"Right-o! That's Lost Lava River. Empties into the Strait of Kala somewhere, but I've never followed it 'way down to the sea. Karazoff's old books say that there's no way of reaching this island except by the Whale Gate Pass. Well, mebbe, mebbe! But to-day, after we finish the fish, we're going to climb sort of casually—just as if we'd just as soon go back as go on. We'll hide our rods and leave our fish, and then, under cover of fog, or night, or what have you, we're going right up Wild Boar Ridges and camp there to-night to see what we can see!

"I've scouted up the trails back of Crageagles, but there ain't nuffin ever to be seen!" complained Boris.

"Well, we'll try again, that's all!"

"Look out for those wild boars!" Jeyna warned the two exploring fishermen. "Judy says they're dangerous!"

"They are, too!" Phil's forefinger followed an east-west valley beyond the trout stream. "Down this fourth cañon is the runway of the wild boars, according to the Journals. They find food of some kind—wild celery roots—the wild rhubarb—roots of berry vines. They must have done a lot of adapting. I'll bet they're more like bears than swine, now!"

Irene leaned over with both elbows on the table as she sat on a stool with her feet twisted in the rungs. Her cheeks were pink with excitement. Maps always stirred her—little maps—big maps—homemade or

official, she loved them all. Had not her grandfather been a maker of maps of this beloved Alaska?

"Why, Phil, old Chak says that those boars catch fish, too, like the bears when the first salmon run begins. Of course they haven't paws like the bears, but they go right into the water when the salmon choke the little streams, and they sort of *shunt* the fish up on the banks and get them that way!"

"Well, I'm not hankering to run into Shansii to-day!" murmured Phil, his eyes still searching out routes on the map.

"We may meet him, though," Boris reminded the skipper. "Chak says that when the mood is on him Shansii ranges everywhere. Says the beasts hole in in the worst weather in some of the Kala caves."

"Well, I've got something for old Shansii if he gets too fresh!" Phil patted his hip pocket, where a .32 awaited summons.

"Every trout pool along this stream," Phil's finger was making flea-like hops down the blue rivage of the trout stream, "every one of these round dots is good for a few casts, and oh, little feller me lad! the size of those fish!"

Phil folded the map again. Now he gave it once more into Irene's keeping.

"I'm not coming down from those ridges till I find out who it is that was climbing that wall last night," said he. "Little Wag-on-the-Wall, look out!"

An hour later the two boys were crossing the south margins of the marshes. Any way you took them, marshes were ticklish going. Slippery! Treacherous!

Niggerheads that looked solid let you down like sponges.

Pretty soon the two had topped the first line of spreading lava fingers known as Wild Boar Ridges. Standing at rest, leaning on their alpenstocks, they looked down at the three limpid green pools of Lost Lava River—pools strung out like jade beads on a silver wire. They heard the shout of white waters freed from their underground channels under the mountains.

Down the boys went. Phil, a little ahead, reached the niggerheads just back of the margin of the first pool. Boris followed close behind. Suddenly, without warning, Boris's right foot buckled under, his ankle gave way, and his knee plunged into a sponge of wet moss as round in shape as a butterbowl. Boris catapulted down the slope, his left side apparently still racing with a power all its own, apart from the rest of his body! Feet first now, he shot ahead, vainly grasping at runners of peat moss that suddenly decided to go along with him by the handfuls!

Well, that right ankle was done for!

"By garry!" he groaned. "I've done it again! Of course it had to be the same foot I hurt last winter!"

He was still sliding. With a thump his left foot landed in the middle of Phil's back as Phil himself sat on his clump of niggerhead that had receded from the bank of the stream, high and dry.

"Ea-sy as you go, there! I had my swim before breakfast!" Phil warned his companion without turning around to look at Boris.

Boris sat still a moment. He was trying to locate a

queer red-hot sliver that must have gone straight through that right ankle.

Still unaware of the mishap that had befallen Boris, Phil, meanwhile, had been taking his fishing rod from the case. Now he was jointing it up. The rod jointed, he put on his reel and adjusted his leader, and standing bent over nearly double far back from the edge of the pool he was preparing to let the flies fall light, just touching the water.

"Try a Parmachene Belle or a Silver Doctor," Phil advised Boris over his shoulder in a whisper.

On the opposite bank of the pool under the scrub willows, perhaps twenty yards away, a water ousel bobbed down, teetered on a jutting piece of lava, plunged in, and with his wings vibrating under water like the paddles of a fairy side-wheeler steamer, he headed upstream to his trysting place under a series of little waterfalls. He disappeared. There came floating back the sound of his exquisite trill—that song of falling crystal waters, of nests in the horsetail rushes on islands in midstream, or in lush green mosses on a shelf of lava rock beneath the falls.

Both boys paused to listen. And as they listened, each thought to himself that there had never been in the world a bird song more brimmingly full of the lyric joy of white, dashing waters and green smooth pools!

Now Boris straightened up again. He shook his broad shoulders. The old ankle could go hang! Boris was going to take some fish!

"Where's that fly book?" gruffly he demanded. The ankle was pretty bad by now. Still without looking

around, Phil tossed over the book. "I'd try a Montreal if I were you. The sun's high now," said he. "They'll rise to the softer hued ones."

Boris's acknowledgment of Phil's suggestion was a growl that became a groan. He followed Phil's advice, nevertheless, and snelled a neutral-colored Montreal to his leader. Then he hobbled to within a foot or two of the brink of the pool and, regardless of the dampness, fell flat on his stomach on the peat moss.

Softly he let the Montreal fly through the air at the end of the shining leader. The fly just touched the water. There came a rush. Something struck. There followed a thrashing and crashing and Boris, breathless, gave him line, line, line!

At the end of the line something weighty headed in for the banks. "Reel him! Take him! Take him!" urged Phil, who had given up for a moment his own sport to watch Boris land the weighty rainbow that was lashing the water.

The rod high in the air now, Boris kept taking in and taking in. And after what seemed hours—hours of holding the tip of the rod high, of giving that bar of silver a lot of line but no slack—hours of line-sawing and swinging as the creature wrestled—the salmon trout lay on the peat mosses.

"It's your big day, all right!" said Phil. Boris whacked the salmon on the head and placed it on a bank of moss well back from the stream under some willows. He pulled up the collar of his gray sweater, for, in spite of the exertion of landing the fighting sal-

mon, he felt suddenly cold and shaky. He knew now, though, that he had not sprained the ankle, just twisted it, that was all.

He cast again, and Phil, too, going to the lower pool, made a cast. Something struck Phil's Parmachene Belle. And another fight was on!

A few moments later, each of the boys had landed three great salmon trout, and had laid them side by side on the sphagnum moss. They were prizes, all right. Their flesh was firm and hard from the glacier waters. The boys packed them carefully, clutching up handfuls of moss and ferns and making a layer of moss, then placing on it one of the trout, another layer of moss, another trout.

And all the while Phil was chuckling with the joy of living once more! For a time he had forgotten his worries. Otter poachers and the unconquerable Vey'gli, the approach of winter, the loss of the dinghy—Phil let them go!

Phil's tanned face wore a smile of such inner beatitude as only the born fisherman can give to the world—on occasion. Gee! Fishing! Whipping a pool again! Dropping the flies again! The tussle with the good warriors down there in the green waters! All these made up for days of worry. Why, this morning's fishing made a fellow human once more!

Hunger struck the two as the trout had struck the Montreal and the Parmachene Belle. They brought out the lunch and they sat down on a couple of niggerheads and ate as much as they could. They dipped tin cups in

the pool and drew them up with a slosh of dripping water and drank, and wiped their mouths with the backs of their hands.

Slices of roast goose between slices of thick dark bread. Ducks' eggs, hard boiled. "Where's the salt?" "Here! Catch!" Black coffee from the thermos bottle.

"Shush! Looky there!"

"Where?" Boris's eyes almost crossed in the effort to focus on Phil's pointing fingertip.

"There, you gump! Under that clump of willows!"

Something was moving over there, a stealthy, slithering shape of tundra colored fur. That was a weasel in his summer coat of tan. His bright, cruel eyes were fixed for a second on the two boys. A pink mouse dangled from his mouth. In a second the weasel had disappeared.

Boris explored the lunch bag and retrieved the drumstick of a goose. He gnawed around it and was happy that geese were fat on Kala. Phil unwrapped a package of raisins. There was silence all around.

After lunch Boris lay back with his shoulders against the slope of a little tundra hill or mound. He dozed off for a minute. Then he wakened to find his right leg stiff and sore. When he tried to limber up his ankle by swinging his foot about in an arc, the pain brought him upright.

"Heck!" he growled. "You'll have to go on alone, Phil, old boy! I thought I could make it, but I twisted my bad foot on that slope back there."

"Gee! I'm sorry! And you've been using it ever since? That's tough luck! I'll help you back!"

"Help nothing!" Boris shook his head. "I can hobble

back. Take my time. The alpenstock will help. I won't mind. Taking my own time that way, I shan't worry about holding you back. Here, help me load up the fish. We can manage a sort of sling-hammock for them with the lunch-bag."

Phil was on his knees examining the ankle. Boris winced, yelled, *"Yow-ie! Yow-ie!"*

By this time the ankle resembled a bulb of giant kelp.

"Busted it, I'll bet!"

Boris shook his head. "Nope. Just twisted it. If I'd stopped right away—but—well, I took my fish, anyway. Guess you'll have to hunt little Wag-on-the-Wall by your lonesome!"

Phil knew that it would be of no avail for him to protest, for him to insist on going back with Boris. When the young Russian's jaw set at just this angle, talking was wasted. Phil said nothing.

Boris turned back on the trail, grinning cheerfully at Phil, and digging stoutly into the peat moss with the sharp end of the alpenstock.

An hour later found Phil some three or four hundred feet above the trout pools, following a ridge trail which had evidently been made by bears or foxes in years gone by. There were no signs of Shansii and his tribe on this ridge, and Phil was glad of that.

For the last hour, a wind from the high passes of Kusko Kala had buffeted and chilled the boy. The mists began to roll down from the heights. Mechanically, the skipper moved away up the trail.

The mists and fogs might be useful. Phil took advantage of the barrage. Whenever the mists rolled

about him, Phil moved slowly, picking his way. When, as often happened, a cold draft angled in from a gully, he would fling himself well down below the rim of the trail and would scramble over the rocks and the mosses, keeping his head well down.

Gradually the fog blanket lifted. Dismal and cold and gray-green now were these Aleutian hills. To the right, far below the ridge, lay the valley of the fishing station and the harbor and the Whale Gates.

And as Phil paused in an angle of lava rock and sat down to rest for a minute, he could see far below to the northwest the level, terraced spot which, from the formation of the soil, the islanders called the Rock Meadows. Here for the past few days Jeyna had been busying herself in mysterious activity which she called "good works." No one could get another word out of her beyond that curt phrase, "Good works, that's all! Please don't be curious!"

Along the north side of Jeyna's old rocky clearing, which a thousand feet square or so, lay flat to the sun and the moon and the stars of the Aleutians, something was moving about in the mosses and alders by a little stream. Phil gasped. Perhaps *that* was Wag-on-the-Wall himself! Getting ready to pounce down on Jeyna and snatch her off as someone had snatched off Billy!

The skipper reached back with his right hand and, clutching the strap of the case that held his Zeiss glasses, brought it over his right shoulder. He swung down the case and opened it and took out the glasses. He rubbed his eyes. As he lifted the instrument he

thought he saw a tree or a shrub moving on the little slope above the clearing!

"'When Dunstan Wood to high Dunsinane hill . . .'" he began, and then stopped. A bush—something *had* moved! A bush—or a queer kind of porcupine. A bundle of something, anyway, propelled by two now completely visible legs! Through the glasses the legs had become visible. Laced, high boots—Jeyna's!

The bundle removed itself from the top of the propelling legs. It was as if an Eskimo had suddenly taken off a mask! The bundle-carrier stood up and stretched as if easing a cramped back. Phil gave a sigh of relief. Gee! For a minute, he'd been scared! Yes, that was Jeyna down there, Jeyna in khaki trousers with her tan wool shirt open at the throat and a crimson handkerchief knotted loosely under the collar of the blouse. Highland boots, the pair that she had brought down from Nome on the *Aphoon* in the hope of wearing them on side trips to the Mendenhall and Spenser glaciers!

For the past few days, in spite of Boris's jibes, Jeyna had insisted on wearing these "shore clothes." So this was *why!*

Beside Jeyna now a second figure stooped. A bent old figure—Tigil's! The two were gathering the bundles of elymus or wild rye, as they'd been doing for almost a week, now.

Phil had observed them coming down from the hill trails that led to and from the Rock Meadows, carrying bundle after bundle of grass and moss. This harvest

they would spread out for drying under one of the old fisheries sheds. Newfoundlanders drying the cod were not more patient or careful than Jeyna at this moss-drying, grass-harvesting task.

The moss must be soaked with fog to-day. It was a thin fog, but penetrating. From the crags the mists were still drifting down. Jeyna might as well go on home. On her rock terrace there would be no sun to-day.

Phil recalled that Karazoff's maps had specified that this rock flooring on the Meadows would some day be used as a landing field for airplanes. Fifty years from now, perhaps. Sixty years. One hundred. In the years when little Highland cattle and Alberta sheep should graze the Aleutian hills and the dwellers on the island of Kala should ship butter and wool and lamb chops to Seattle by airplane! *Whoopee!*

No, the light fog wasn't stopping Jeyna. She was going right on gathering the sphagnums and the wild rye for fuel twists to use as the Russians had used them, in Judy's brick stove or *petchka*. Good idea, that! This winter they'd all have to get under a roof after they had put skids and rollers under the cruiser and had her safe above the water line. How the days were slipping by! Pretty soon winter would be here. So far, tireless activity had kept them going, kept their spirits up. Fishing, hunting for the nests of wild fowl, dressing and drying salmon after they'd hauled in a net full of lithe, thrashing beauties! Digging edible roots and storing them in the cellar which Phil and Boris had dug in the side of a hill back of one of the station cabins. Picking berries and storing them in jars in the ice caves

back of Crageagles. Truly, so far they had been busy enough! From now on they'd be busier!

Phil's glasses found Irene—stooping down among the rows of vegetables in her little garden on the south slope. "A green leaf a day keeps the scurvy away!" Irene insisted. She fed them sparingly a little blade of lettuce every day, promising them more generous helpings when the plants were grown. She doled out tiny green onions and scallions as if they were worth their weight in gold dust. There! Irene was going down the hill trail. In a few minutes she'd be getting supper! Phil suddenly sickened of mists and fog and cold. Then he said crisply aloud, "Now or never! I'm going on!"

And now the mists cleared from up among the peaks of Kala, but the valley of the terraces and the harbor valley were still churning seas of mists like the upper surfaces of rain clouds seen from above from airplane or mountain top.

Phil's wool shirt and even his leather jacket were dripping with tiny droplets of fog. He was suddenly thirsty. Searching about on either side of the trail, he found on the northern slope under the ridge a little spring of fresh water that gushed forth with a bubbling sound from a slab of sheer basalt. He stooped over and lapped up great mouthfuls of water and felt rested and refreshed.

He went on. Suddenly he dropped down on hands and knees and slid down a little way on the slope in the sphagnums. Someone was on the trail just ahead of him! Now who could that be? Chak? Phil grinned to himself at the thought. Chak hated the trails as a

polar bear must hate a pool in a city park. Besides, Chak had said that he was going to Ongoo.

Judy herself? Suddenly Phil recalled the fact that Judy didn't like to go into the hills either. She disclaimed any fear of the Vey'gli, but just the same . . .! Phil decided that he'd be pretty angry if Judy came along and messed his plans for the afternoon and the evening!

The next minute, there was Judy herself, like a witch with honey-colored hair in a halo about her head. Crouched down on her toes in the trail, she rested her hands on the earth and moss and peered down over the southern slope of this highest of the Wild Boar Ridges.

What was Judy Ivanoff doing here?

Observing the girl, Phil pondered what he should do. If he startled her, she might lose her balance and go plunging down to the foot of the crags, or even into the boiling waters of the strait of Kala far below the ridges!

Fog-bound depths would swallow up forever little Judy! Then Phil almost lost his own balance!

"Come here, Phil, and look!" softly came Judy's voice.

Phil sprang a step or two up the trail and crouched down beside the girl. He freed his left shoulder of the coil of rope and laid the rope in the trail beside him. He might need it later on. He wasn't going to let this encounter with Judy interfere with his plans for the reconnaissance of the shores of Angka down below there across the straits!

He looked down. Far down the moss-covered slopes of the ridge, now, there came a squealing and squeaking. A clamor of high-keyed cries. It was the tribe of Shansii! As they gazed down, Judy pointed to a little growth of willows and chaparral about five feet below the ridge.

"I'm going down!"

Judy wasn't—Phil realized—talking to him at all. She was so wrapped in some plan that she didn't realize that Phil was there on the ridge beside her. Before Phil could say a word, there was Judy sliding down to perch in that clump of stout chaparral. Then she faced about and called to Phil to hand her down the glasses.

"Luk used to drive them pell-mell!" Phil heard the girl say in a low voice as if to herself. "It's Luk, up to all the mischief! I thought as much last night when the *Seahorse* burned. Now I know it, seeing the wild boars scattering down the cañon!"

Judy called out over her shoulder to Phil as she swung about, still gripping the chaparral branches, "Luk is on the mountain somewhere!"

"I don't quite get you!" cried Phil. "Good luck? What?"

"Luk, son of Tigil!" Judy called back. "Kay taught him to swim like a fish. He came back to Kala somehow, probably with Orca Pougher when Orca came down from the Yukon. I know now. Luk saw you boys on Kala here, and he went mad with jealousy. He slashed the dinghy. He set fire to the *Seahorse!*"

"How you do know things!" laughed Phil.

"I know Luk!" retorted Judy, swinging back again

to look down again into the depths of the cañon far below. "Luk used to love to drive the wild boars down from the hills. See! Here they come! I told you!"

There, far, far below, sure enough, the wild boars were scurrying! Like a flock of demoralized, dwarfish gnomes the wild boars were all heading down toward a dark pocket of rock that must be their shelters.

"Can't get up here, can they?" called out Phil, his interest in Shansii's offspring outweighing his desire to be unobserved of any sea otter poachers who might be on the lookout over there on Angka. He had already warned Judy of the danger from those possible poachers, but Judy had given no heed.

"Of course those wild boars can get up here!" came Judy's not too reassuring reply. "The cañons connect up above here in the hills. Plateaus, you know, hanging over the cañons! Trails everywhere! That's where Shansii dwells—high up above here!"

And as if Judy had summoned the dreadful Shansii by the very mention of his name, suddenly there came a great hollow sound, half grunt, half bellow, from above them on the ridge. And there, with his head close to the ground, his eyes red with hate and fury, appeared the gray-black hulk of a creature as large, Phil thought, as a Kodiak bear.

Phil shouted, "Shansii! Here! Judy, duck down, down! He mustn't see you!"

The brute beast was coming on. Phil seized the coil of rope, slithered down the trail, and then looked up. The monster had his eyes on Judy's face. He was digging into the slope with his great rear hoofs, his fore-

feet letting him down as if they were held by cleats. He was wedging his way down the slope. Here he was at home. He knew his way on the trails, did Shansii, the brute wild boar who ate fish!

In a split second Phil was across the trail. He seized the coil of line. Then, with his back to a tough scrub willow, he raised high his right arm and flung out the coiled rope, or lariat, that he had brought to tie about lava boulder or pinnacle of basalt as he climbed the ridges. Right over the ugly head of the wild boar the circle of rope whirled, settled, caught! Phil found himself plunging forward. With his left arm he flung half his body about the scrub willow. He gave a desperate back pull. Shansii reared up and tried to turn his horrible great head. Working desperately in the tiny interval of slack on the line, Phil succeeded in snubbing the end of the lariat about the willow. That willow, with its roots deep down, coiled lariat-wise, perhaps, about underground thrusts of lava rock, its hold tightening with every gale and tempest! The blessed willow held—held—held!

There came a terrible tautening of the line and Shansii plunged. Phil had a glimpse of Judy's white face looking up. He clutched the .32. Took aim. Fired. The bullet struck Shansii a slanting clip! The huge beast reared up again. Judy dashed out and up the trail to Phil's encircling arm. A second shot meanwhile had rung out. The giant form of the wild boar reared, and with a terrible shriek, Shansii plunged straight down the perpendicular walls of Kala.

For a moment Judy and Phil said nothing. They

stood close together, and then the girl, her hot cheeks against Phil's, put her arms about his neck and kissed him.

"You are brave, Phil Wayne!" she cried. And she kissed him a second time. Then Phil kissed Judy and enjoyed it all very much. Judy was a darling kid. Not a pal, like Irene, but just a darling kid!

After the tense excitement of the past swift seconds, Phil thought that there could be nothing in the world much nicer than to stand here with his arms about Judy! He kissed her a second time. Probably he would have kissed her a third time, too, had there not come just then an interruption as explosive as a pistol shot.

Down from the slopes above them there came a wild crying. And then from the mists and fogs of the ridge trail there emerged a little figure of a youth clad in an Eskimo parka of marmot fur with dangling tails of mink and beaver. The creature wore a hood that was bordered with Siberian wolf, and his face, pinched and brown, with its high cheekbones and deep-set eyes, looked fury into theirs.

He flung both arms above his head and cried out in a shrill, high voice, "Luk, he have you now! He break you up both together like he break boat to nothings!"

Judy shrunk close to Phil. "It is Luk, come back from the Yukon with Orca Pougher!" she cried. "Oh, Phil, look out!"

The Eskimo boy, his eyes on Phil's arm that still encircled Judy, now drew from the inner pocket of his parka a bolas and with lifted arm was taking aim, when suddenly his gaze turned to the trampled spot

whence Shansii had started slipping into the gulf of space.

With a smothered shriek Luk was down on all fours, examining those hoof marks in the rocky soil. Then he ran down the slope a little way, stooping on the run to claw at the hoofprints with his right hand, uttering sharp little cries as he plunged. Then Luk began to slide. Too late, Phil perceived the lad's danger. With a swift movement Phil flung Judy backward to safety on the slope above the trail. Then he, too, plunged down, striving to catch up with Luk before the Eskimo should reach the ledge above the cañon.

With a last wild shriek the Eskimo boy stood poised at the very brink of the cañon, then he stooped down and peered into the depths where his playfellow of yesterday, the terrible Shansii, had met his death on the surf rocks below.

Suddenly there came a spurt of smoke from the shores of Angka, and almost at the same instant Luk threw up his hands and plunged headlong.

Speechless and terrified, Judy and Phil stood there on the trail.

Judy was the first to break the silence. "Poor little Luk!" she cried, and then she suddenly dropped to her knees on the moss and pulled Phil down beside her. "Don't stand up here!" she warned him. "The poachers on Angka picked off Luk—to give us due notice of what *we* may expect!" she said, almost as if she were arguing to convince herself.

"The great bullies!"

"Orca Pougher knows the Yukon natives. Up at

Russian Mission he happened to meet Luk. He learned that Luk knew all about the island of Kala. Luk knew more about this island and about the island of Angka than Karazoff himself did. So Orca brought Luk back as a guide!"

Judy sprang to her feet, slid down the north slope a rod or so, then turned and faced Phil Wayne. Her hair was loosened and the damp was making it curl all about her head in a halo of brown-gold. "Phil," she cried, "there's some way those men have of getting over here from Angka without going around and through the Whale Gates! They couldn't do that—come around that way—oftener than once or twice in the year. There's another way!"

"Of couse there is!" agreed Phil a little dully. The impacts were coming too swiftly. Phil's receiving set was temporarily out of order. "I know as well as if Orca had written me a note to tell me, that some day pretty soon they'll be coming over to steal the *Aphoon* and the Robson treasure, and your stones and nuggets that Karazoff told us about! We've searched the whole dinged island, and can't find the way to Angka. I don't know what in the world we can do about it!"

Phil turned a blank face toward Judy and looked into her eyes.

Judy's glance scorched.

"Do? Do?" she cried. "Why, stupid, find the way they come and block it! Go across to Angka the same way and steal back your own gasoline! Don't worry about my stones! They're safe enough! Leave it to me to see about them!"

The next minute Phil was staring at a picture frame of atmosphere from which the life-size portrait of Judy had been withdrawn!

Phil shrugged his shoulders. Gee, but Judy had claws! Boris liked 'em like that! Phil decided that he himself didn't like them like that at all. So *that* was all the average girl's kisses amounted to!

The skipper turned about, crawled up to the rim of the trail, and groped along till he found the end of his lariat snubbed about the willow shrub. This he disengaged, wound up what was left of the coil of line, retrieved his .32 from the moss beside him, and then crawled on up along the slope, always keeping below the ridge.

He had no wish to act as a target for Orca Pougher, and he was not at all ashamed of the precautions he was taking in order to keep well out of range of vision of the snipers over there on Angka.

Half an hour later Phil stood upright on a rocky platform about a quarter of a mile farther up the mountain side in the lee of a rock cairn from which he had safe reconnaissance.

He could see that the island of Angka was round and flat and perhaps five or six miles across. Treeless, of course, like the other islands of the archipelago, it was covered with a rank growth of grasses and chaparral, and it had several little lakes or ponds strung out along a north-to-south median line. A queue of sand-spits curled all about the northwestern corner of the island beyond the outlet of the strait of Kala. To the east the tundra fluted up into a low range of smoke-vent

hills. Most likely the extinct crater where the Soviets were mining sulphur lay somewhere among these hills.

With the aid of his Zeiss glasses, Phil swept the whole range of the island. A great bay swung in from the Bering Sea to form a crescent-shaped harbor midway of the west shore. To the south, a wall of cliffs of considerable height obstructed the view.

Suddenly Phil gasped. He swung his glasses up again and focused them once more on the crescent-shaped bay. Could he credit his eyes? There *was* a river pouring out green floods into the bay! But where could this stream have its rise? From what he could see of Angka, there was no surface stream at all in the whole length and breadth of the island!

He saw no signs of life on Angka. Yet there must be sheltered fiords over there below the wall of cliffs. Perhaps here the poachers and the pirates had their ship steadings. There was no dwelling observable. Perhaps the men had found shelter in the old barrabarra, those underground dwellings of the natives—mound-like structures above the ground, cave-like beneath—common to all Alaska before the coming of the Russians.

For all Phil knew, the island of Angka might be swarming with otter poachers and sulphur miners as rotting wood sometimes swarms with termites.

A sudden anger rose in him that he could not, for all his searching, find out the way to Angka. There on Angka he would find Billy. There, too, he would probably find Chen Luen. The marauder, or the marauders,

had come and snatched Billy away. That they might use him as a hostage? Trade Billy for the *Aphoon?* Merely make friends with him and so win him over, inveigle him so into furnishing them with the facts that they might want concerning the "lay" of the *Aphoon* and the amount of treasure she carried?

On hands and knees, now, Phil crawled close to the sheer edge of the cliff and looked down. Below him he could see the white foam of the narrow strait lathering and boiling from one side of the Pass to the other. The swelling white waters of the strait writhed like a serpent hooded with foam! . . .

Phil reconnoitered and estimated and gauged distances from the south wall of Kala to the north wall of Angka. Put *to* it, he thought that he'd even dare to try swinging across and out if he had a rope long enough and stout enough and securely enough tied about one of these needle-like columns of towering lava. He could buffer the rope with moss and grass so carefully that the stone would not cut the rope in two!

Why couldn't he make a stout rope of kelp, such as Chak had taught Boris and Phil to fashion? By garry! Already they had on hand a large enough supply of kelp to warrant a try of Phil's scheme! One calm morning last week, Boris and Phil had gone with the old Aleut in the two-hatch boat—or bidarka of walrus-hide—out through the Whale Gates when the tide was low. And outside the barrier reef, above the vast kelp beds, Chak had shown them the old Aleut way of obtaining kelp for the fishing lines. Kelp lines so stout

and so trustworthy were they that the Aleut could handle a two-hundred-pound halibut, with the line taut, too!

Each of the three canoeists that day had held in his hand a long forked stick of driftwood, with a sharp knife fastened by means of thongs to the ends of the sticks. Lowering these knife-tipped sticks into the waters above the kelp beds, the three had spent several tiresome hours cutting the young kelp fronds. And then for hours on end Chak had helped them splice the ropes together, and had shown them how to keep the kelp damp to prevent its becoming too brittle for their purpose.

Jupiter! If that kelp rope that Chak had made would hold a two-hundred-pound fish—a fighting fish—it would surely hold one-hundred-and-forty-pound Phil Wayne while he slid through the air to Angka! He'd get a great take-off from that flat basalt platform, then, zoom! He'd be out—and over!

Dangerous business? No, not so very dangerous! All the "foursome"—Irene and Jeyna and Boris and Phil—had used the kelp rope in their tug-of-war games on shore for the past week!

Phil wouldn't let anybody else in on his new enterprise. Suddenly the youth stumbled against a small round boulder and dislodged it. The small rock dodged off the ridge, swung in, and then with a clatter rolled down a rock slope into the strait.

Instantly Phil observed over there on Angka a light gleam suddenly in the twilight like an idol's eyes in the dimness of a temple!

"Well, that was easy!" Phil whispered. "There you are, over there! Just what I wanted to know! Whoever leaps across the chasm from high Kala to just-a-little-lower Angka will meet a guard—a sure enough patrol, over there!"

As the twilight shadows lengthened, and the dark came down from the heights, it grew very cold. The thought of what he hoped to do to-morrow shot through Phil with a tingling thrill of pleasure. Two trails to follow! First, to seek out once more the ancient Caves of the Whalers and go over every inch of explorable space in the dark caves! Then, if he found in the caves no way across to Angka, *then* to come back to this rock cairn and prepare to put into practice some of the training he'd got in school—the running broad jump *de luxe!* He'd get a good start on that rocky plateau behind him! He'd have the kelp rope buffered and fast about the lava pillar, and then, like Kraaa, the golden eagle, he'd soar into the blue! *How he would soar!*

For another long cold hour Phil stood the watch in the shelter of the cairn. Far away to the south on Angka finally a faint glow spread across a little patch of sky or cloud or cliff. In the dark, Phil couldn't make out which the reflector was. Cloud, probably. He listened intently. He hoped that he might catch the sound of voices in the night. But only the petrels broke the silence with their chirpings, bursting bubbles of brittle sound against the stir and splash of falling waters everywhere. The glow fell off in the southern sky. Gee! Angka folks went early to bed!

Phil tramped down the northern slope of the hill,

picking his way carefully, lighting his footsteps with his electric torch. He came out on the ridge back of Crageagles, finally. The cabins were asleep. A wakeful dog snuffed at the boy's heels but made no outcry. Phil skirted the little patch of ground where Irene had her garden. The fragrance of freshly turned earth came drifting from the spot. In the moonlight a row of tiny scallions thrust through the soil in a line of faëry spears of silver metal. Phil was hungry. He wanted some hot steaks and a yellow bowl full of crisp lettuce stirred with a stick with a little onion on the stirring-end!

He was down by the old wharves once more. He was signaling on the kelp horn for someone to come ferry him across to the cruiser.

Then he was sitting perched on a stool down in the galley. Jeyna was ladling out for him a bowlful of the rich duck gumbo soup that Irene had late this afternoon made for Phil's midnight supper. Boris came limping into the room. He squeezed into a corner and with sighs of utter satisfaction helped himself to a bowl of the duck gumbo, too.

"It's almost as good as Judy's crawfish bisque with *sauce piquante,*" approved Boris while Phil helped himself to another plate of lettuce salad and then leaned back and balanced on the stool and between bites told them about the end of Shansii and the tragedy of Luk's taking off. But Phil said nothing at all about his plans for to-morrow. He wouldn't have Boris limping up the trails with that game foot of his, and he wouldn't have Irene and Jeyna risking their heads in any such enterprise as this which he now planned.

Irene searched Phil's face. She couldn't make out what Phil was up to. He had some plan. Well, she'd keep extra watch to-morrow to see that he didn't go off by himself scouting in Kala.

Boris thought to himself, "I'm going to have a try myself at the Caves of the Whalers, to-morrow. First thing we know, Phil will tumble onto the way to Angka. Then he'll offer himself as a hostage or trade himself for a supply of gasoline. The young man Phil will bear watching!"

Jeyna said to herself, "Just two more days, and I'll kindle my beacon fires on the Rock Meadows! It's silly to keep the signal fires burning as we do just on the South Whale! No ships will try to make the Whale Gates Pass. But out there on the Bering Sea side of the island my nineteen-foot letters—S O S—done in blazing fires of burning driftwood and sulphur and sphagnums every night! The Rock Meadows have thousands of square feet of level surface. An airplane could come down there. And a plane with low landing speed—not more than seventy or eighty miles, and very light, could rise from a flat clearance of four hundred feet!"

"To-morrow," they all said to themselves. "To-morrow!"

CHAPTER XIV

THE WAY TO ANGKA

IT WAS almost daylight next morning when Phil reached the cliffs on the Bering Sea side of Kala, found the trail between two lava domes, and came out finally on the narrow path—a mere thread of a footpath along the face of the rocks. Far below him the waters beat against the basalt ramparts of the western walls of the island.

As Phil made his way slowly toward the mouth of the outer caverns, he suddenly stopped stock still. A thrill of fear shot through his body. The hand that held the torch shook. His knees loosened beneath him.

He listened intently.

There! The sound had come again!

Someone was making a fearful moaning noise inside that cave. "Vey'gli nothing!" Phil scouted the suggestion that his first fear had conjured.

"It's a little *plant,* a little Angka *plant* just waiting to be picked!" he scoffed. The sound of the groaning had ceased, but it had been a sound as real as toothache!

There was a long silence.

There came a shuffling of feet. A rock struck rock and fell away into the void.

Suddenly Phil shouted, "Come out of there! We'll smoke you out like a rat in a hole!"

Then in the growing light, someone came limping out of the cave. He proved to be a rather good-looking young fellow, seen by torchlight. Phil thought, "A half-breed Indian!" The youth, who couldn't have been more than seventeen or eighteen, had a cast of features quite regular and pleasing. A high-bridged nose and a blend of humor in eyes and mouth. In spite of his groanings and moanings of a moment ago, he was now smiling. Somehow Phil wished that he hadn't smiled. Above the smile the youth's shifting eyes roved from Phil's old cap to his worn shoes and back to the cap again. Not once did he look Phil squarely in the eyes.

The fellow now hobbled forward a little, leaning on a cane that had a long curved handle.

Phil flattened himself against the rock wall and with an unexpected swift movement slid along until he stood behind the smiling stranger.

"Let's get out of here before we talk!" said the skipper. "You first, brother!"

After one swift glance at Phil's right hand that rested ever so lightly on something in Phil's right trousers pocket, the fellow moved on, taking the lead as the two traversed the narrow trail above the sea, threaded the pass, and came out on the eastern slope high above the Rock Meadows and Crageagles cabins.

A little later, on board the *Aphoon,* breakfast finished, the stranger sat at ease on a chair on the afterdeck and told the two boys about himself.

His name was Lance Drybread. "Indian! I told you

so!" thought Phil. Lance had come along with the little group of young Soviets from it didn't matter what country in Asia, to help mine sulphur in the crater of that extinct volcano on Angka. No matter about him!

Yes, the Soviets had their own boats for shipping that sulphur to—let's say—Vladivostok. As usual, the fellows had made camp on their arrival over there on the southwestern shore of Angka, where they had good anchorage in a protected fiord or two at the foot of the cliffs. The fiords ran up into the island in two great V-shaped bays.

Well, about to embark for their home ports after a good season's work, the Soviets had been attacked by the infamous otter poacher, Orca Pougher, and his native hunters. Later, the Asiatics had joined forces with Pougher. Why not? Hadn't Pougher assured them that there was much treasure to be had for the taking over here on Kala: an off-shore cruiser worth a thousand otter pelts; a store of ancient money from an old hoard in the tundra country; and a *pooksak* full of semiprecious stones that belonged to old Karazoff's niece, the girl Judith?

Why had the poachers so long delayed the attack on Kala?

Lance Drybread laughed with his head back and his eyes almost shut. Then he leaned forward, his elbow on his knee, and with a wagging forefinger explained:

Orca Pougher had been waiting for someone to locate that *pooksak* for him! That was all! And the other night, an old miner from Kala, a Chinaman named Chen Luen, had come to Angka to say to Orca Pougher

that he knew right where he could lay his hands on the *pooksak!*

Chen Luen, it appeared, would trade his knowledge of the whereabouts of the *pooksak* for free passage with the poachers back to Nome. Did Pougher take him up on that offer? Take a Chinaman's word? Not much! Pougher was much too clever for that! To-morrow night, Orca Pougher was coming himself to Kala with the old Chinaman in tow! Then Orca would put to the test the old man's boast. If Chen Luen had lied, so much the worse for him!

Lance Drybread's gesture hurled a defaulting Chen Luen into the sea!

To-morrow night, then, the members of the cruise might expect Pougher and his men. After the sortie against the *Aphoon* and her owners and against the stronghold, Crageagles, any unpleasant inquiries from curious authorities could be met with a fact duly vouched for by Pougher: Tidal waves were of no infrequent occurrence down here among the Aleutian Islands, where the volcanoes heaved and thundered, and the earth was never quite still, nor the waters safe. Evidently, an earthquake and a tidal wave had done for the *Aphoon!*

Why had Drybread come?

Time was pressing. Pougher was anxious to get away from Angka before the—well—right away!

Yes, there was a way of communication between Angka and Kala. Not by the Strait. Not even the natives had ever gone by the Strait of Kala. No. Unfortunately, Lance Drybread did not know the way.

Lance's long thin hand stroked his pointed chin as he assured them that he did not know the way.

"Shucks!" exclaimed Phil, looking up from the stick that he was whittling. "How did you get here yourself?"

Drybread leaned both hands on the head of the cane and pressed down hard and smiled broadly.

"They don't trust me, over there," said he with a nod in the general direction of Angka. "I've been too friendly with Baxter. Your native, Billy, I mean."

Phil nodded, and began to whittle again.

At the last the poachers had blindfolded Drybread, according to his own story. Then they had led him up hill and down dale, over rocks and niggerheads to the Caves of the Whalers. In what spot exactly they had terminated their long trek, Drybread couldn't for the life of him say. He'd found himself alone at last, the blindfold removed. Then he had come down a trail between two hills and along a path etched on the face of a cliff. He had headed *into* the Caves and had twisted his ankle. He had doubled up, groaning with misery, and then, at Phil's command, had headed *out* of the Caves! Only one fact was really clear to him: the way *to* Angka—the way *from* Angka—did not lead *through* the Caves of the Whalers!

Now, *now* (Lance Drybread's chest swelled with pride as he went on) he could himself make arrangements. If Skipper Wayne and Dr. Robson would agree to turn over to Drybread all the money in the hold of the *Aphoon,* Lance would give his word (here Boris was afflicted with a severe attack of what sounded like

a bronchial cough)—his *word,* mind you—that there would be no attack on Kala. Besides, the Angka crowd would furnish the cruiser with gas for the trip as far as Dutch Harbor!

The members of the cruise must guarantee, though, that they would sit tight on the cruiser for a whole day while Drybread, unwatched, free, transported the treasure little by little to wherever he was supposed to take it!

"And that's all there is *to* it?" demanded Phil, pausing with the blade of his pocketknife in mid-air.

"That's all!"

"And you *have* the gasoline?"

Again Drybread's hand stroked his chin.

"We—have—it. Yes."

Conversation now became what is termed general. At least, Drybread's monologue turned to other subjects—principally Aleutiana: Drybread wouldn't mind living forever right here on Kala. No, he didn't mind the rains and the fogs. Dandy climate, take it all in all. Never lower than zero in winter. The Soviet fellows had been coming to Angka now for five summers running. Some time, when Russia gets into a brawl again and drags in a coupla other nations, the sulphur mines will be the cat's whiskers. That's what! Next time, whoever controls the Aleutian passes from the Bering Sea into the North Pacific, will control the wealth of all Alaska, and by and by somebody across the sea is going to grab! And keep!

Drybread drew a pipe from his pocket, took out a zipper-top tobacco pouch, and ran back the zipper with

a little humming, drumming sound. He took out some tobacco and loaded his pipe, then he lighted it with a patent lighter that happened to work.

'Think it over," he advised. "For a proper consideration, say gas for your cruiser, you ought to be more than willing to part with some of that treasure—to me."

"Of course you'll have to give us quite a little time for thinking it over," mildly Phil suggested.

Drybread drew a long whiff on his pipe, removed the pipe from his mouth, and held it up while he scanned the bowl.

With lips pursed, he squinted at the pipe.

"We'll—*I'll*—give you till to-morrow at seven in the evening," said he. "Then, if you think best to refuse, you'll find Orca Pougher somewhere on Kala!"

"Say, fellah!" Boris was tipping back unconcernedly in his chair, his arms outstretched along the rail on each side. "How'd you find out about all this? About the *Aphoon* and the treasure?" demanded he. "I've heard about the grapevine telegraph and the Eskimo wireless, but this beats them to volcanic dust!"

"They've been broadcasting from the Nome radio station ever since you failed to turn up at Dutch Harbor or Seward or Juneau," casually Drybread explained. "Every ship has been warned to keep a lookout, especially down off the Aleutians." The fellow's nostrils fluted cruelly. "No ship will have a look-in at Kala, since the charts show that this harbor has been bottled up since 'way back, before last earthquake time!"

It was Boris's turn to nod wisely.

All day Judy had remained at Crageagles alone with Sun-up-sun and Ilak and Whispii and Tipii. Once Boris caught a glimpse of the girl and her dogs racing along a terrace below the cabins. He caught the sound of her gay laughter, but that was all. In the middle of the afternoon, Phil and Boris went up to the cabins to find Chak. Tigil couldn't tell them where Chak was. One sleep ago he had said that he was going in his bidarka to Ongoo. He'd be camping to-night, then, on Little Whale Ear.

Tigil was indifferent. She looked up blankly from the white ermine parka with the gorgeous cross-fox collar. Tigil was mending a rent in the soft garment. She looked down blankly. From a wooden kamlek full of beads of red and green and yellow, she selected a red bead that looked as large and brilliant as a ruby, and she shook her head and said, "Me dunno!"

"Checking up on Chak isn't so easy!" laughed Boris as the two turned away from the cabin door. The conference with Chak must be postponed.

It was five hours later. Early dusk on Kala. Shadows and dusk, and the coming on of night about the cruiser. As he made his way past the port gate, where the ladder was down, Phil heard a sound of voices out on the water somewhere near at hand. He stood still, then withdrew into the shadows of the deckhouse, and stared down.

By gerry! There was the old dory down there on the quiet waters, rocking at the end of her painter. And sitting there, face to face, plain as an etching in the moonlight, Judy Ivanoff and Lance Drybread! Judy's elbows were on her knees, her hands cupping her firm

round chin. Phil thought that she looked lovely there in the dusk.

So! Judy and Lance! All day Judy had eluded every member of the "foursome" who had sought her on shore. Was the reason to be found in her sudden interest in this Lance Drybread with whom she must have struck up acquaintance when Lance went ashore after dinner!

After Phil had listened almost unwittingly to the first few words of that conversation being carried on in the dory, he set himself to listening deliberately. There was too much at stake now in Kala for the skipper to be squeamish about the ethics of eavesdropping! Something was going on right under their noses, and Phil intended to find out what was up!

"By the sacred pigtail of the Mandarin, what next?" he gasped out to himself when he heard Judy saying:

"I go with you now always, my Lance Drybread!"

"By gerry, Judy! Don't trust the rascal!" Phil wanted to shout his warning into Judy's ear, but he refrained. He saw the dory rock suddenly as Drybread half started from his seat, then sank back again.

So this lad with the shifting eyes had really made a hit with Judy!

"No, me jus' teasing!" said Judy then, dropping into the vernacular and the tone of the Aleut girl of the cannery stations.

"Me all time tease big boys on this island. Tease, all time. Tease Boris, tease Skipper Phil, and now tease Lance Drybread!"

"Oh, all right, little Siwashy!" exclaimed the girl's

companion contemptuously. "Say, you got good grub up at that cabin of yours?" The youth leaned over with his pipe in his hand and looked into Judy's face. "I'll go up with you to have a snack, I guess. I'll get a sackful of decent eats to throw across the strait of Kala to Billy Baxter. That's Ogalok, you know, sister! He's another half-breed. Billy said to tell you he was starving . . . starving!"

"O-oooo! Billy, him starve? That good boy?" Phil could imagine how Judy's eyes were popping. "Him—the good Bill-eee—*staarve?*"

"You bet, little Siwashy!"

The moon, wandering along the summit of the Wild Boar Ridges, turned a pale searchlight on the two in the dory.

"And Lance Drybread, him let little Judy—little ignoran' Judy—help the good big brave Billee?"

"You betcha!" Drybread chuckled audibly. "You bet you can help, little Siwashy! You help *pronto!*"

"An' Mr. Pronto, will he help you carry—help you throw those good things to eat across the strait of Kala to Bill-ee?"

Now at length Phil understood? Clever little Judy! But how had Judy come to know what a rascal this Drybread was? Phil wanted to punch Drybread's nose! Lance *would* tease Judy, would he? Was the fellow hoping that Judy would take him up to Crageagles? Invite him to come with her that he might institute a Chinese ceremonial of taking out the things kept hidden away? That he might pounce on her jewels and make off with them?

Like the soft rippling of water against a white beach came now Judy's laughter.

"What you want most, poor Lance Drybread," said Judy, suddenly sliding down to sit at Lance's feet on a grass cushion to look up into Lance's face with her blue eyes intent on his, "what you want most is a breakfast of grapefruit, toast and crisp rolls, covered dishes of sausage and ducks' livers and ham and eggs, a pot of fragrant coffee, and pitchers of cream!"

"Why," Lance's tone warmed, "you're shouting out loud, that's what I do want! A week or two of camp grub is about all that I can stand!"

"A week or two of camp grub!" Phil's unconscious mentor jogged Phil's elbow and told him to jot that down! *"A week or two of camp grub, indeed!"*

"Now, little Siwashy," said Lance jauntily, "I've agreed to stand the watch on the *Aphoon* to-night, myself! A new spoke at the wheel of a boat that won't draw out of this harbor for a coon's age!"

"Strike *two* for Judy!" thought Lance breathlessly. "That was a dead give-away, Lance! *An extra spoke at the wheel to-night,* Lance? That's rare, that is! Thanks again, Judy!"

"Come, then," pleaded Judy softly. "Now, to-night!"

"No, sister, not to-night!" Suddenly the youth's voice hardened. "You get away, little Siwashy! Heap big nuisance! *Hi-yi-maki-li!* Clear out! How do I know that you're not onto——"

"Onto—? Ye-es?" came the crooning whisper from the girl on the grass mat.

But Lance refused to go on.

"Oh, nothing!" he jerked out curtly.

Judy went on: "You no lik' the breakfas' I quote you from the *Sat Eve Posses* that ship's cap'n lef' here las' year before the earthquake, eh? You come supper to-night with Judy! Judy gif you fash'nable *Vanity Fair* eats! *Goulash à la goose!*" Judy gave a long-drawn sigh that floated up the ladder like a wisp of drifting fog. "Judy not long on the talk. Never have any chance to learn much talk, coop up here on Kala like Ilak in his corral. But Judy her long on the head. Long on the make nice supper. When it come to cook, Judy know her sugar and spice an'—an' everything ni-ice!"

"You're a smart little Siwashy, all right! I say, if we stay here—if you and I stay here—after we do in these swells——"

"Oh, ye-es! Then?" Judy's voice was eager. "That might be so *ni-ice!* These boys here they think that Judy too *stoopide!* Too wild—too ignoran'! Perhaps if you stay after you—*do in*—*do in* Phil Wayne and Boris Asche and the others—then perhaps Judy show you where her jooels are! Mebbe you come to supper to-morrow night, then Judy tell you where are the jooels!"

Lance's face was close to Judy's now, his shifting eyes did not shift now.

"You're not fooling me?"

"Oh, no. Nobody fool Mr. Lance Drybread!"

"The newspapers said that the *Aphoon* was known to have been carrying stones—coins, too—from an old hoard cached years ago in the tundra down in the sand dunes near the Bering Sea!"

"*No-o-o-o!* They mus' mean Judy Ivanoff's stones—Judy's coins! Yes, I guess that what they mean! Judy have the many stones from the lapis lazuli. An' she have the yellow diamon', and mebbe some fine nuggets from —a—a sailor who bring them to Judy from that Amoor River in Siberia!"

"You're not spoofing me? Say, sister, have you jewels enough to make it worth my while to let the folks on the cruiser go? They may be mixed up somehow with the government. A fellow's got to protect himself. The U. S. has got a long arm. You and I—Judy—could take your—your jewels—and your stones of lazuli—and skip! Your old Aleut could get us up to that summer settlement on Ongoo, couldn't he? In fair weather? But—I'd sure hate to leave this treasure ship lying here like this—an easy haul if there ever was one!"

"I daresay!" whispered Judy. Then in a thin little singsong voice she went on, "After all, somebody make the big fool out of Lance Drybread! This great fine boat—this *Aphoon*—him not a treasure ship at all! Judy find that out! These boys they will talk so *bi-ig!* All those Spanish doubloons they bring down from that place—the Towers in the Tundra—they have change already into orders on the Metropolitan National Bank of Seattle. Change 'em at Nome, long time ago. When they get to Seattle, that fine bank give them all much wealth. You know how that go! The Nome bank want the—what you say—bullion—the gold. These big boys want the credit!"

"Thunder! Of course!" Lance's tone was flat. "So *that's* it? I knew there was a big hitch somewhere!"

"Ye-es! The so bi-ig heetch! You foresee the bi-ig sneeze, the bi-ig *katchou!* Is it the bi-ig heetch that Orca the Pougher has on Lance Drybread?"

A snort of disgust from Drybread, and Judy's whisper comforted the adventurer:

"Yes," she said reminiscently, "theese boys they get the credit when they come to Seattle. Their treasure where you cannot touch it . . . what you say . . . where moth and rust do not corrupt nor thieves break through and steal?"

"Humph!" grumbled Drybread, seizing his cane from the bottom of the dory and grasping it in his right hand.

Judy's voice was lively.

"But my stones from Nertchka, now," she said, "you could do the bi-ig double-cross on those gang from Angka. Nobody but Judy know where is that great treasure. Nobody ever going to know excep' that person—excep' Judy like that person very, very much—like I like you!"

"Of course!" Drybread's chest expanded. "I can protect your interests. Now to get right down—but I'll tell you my plans to-morrow night—after—after I have the jewels!"

Suddenly Judy's voice rang out clear and strong.

"If I knew that you'd play fair, Lance Drybread, I'd give you the treasure—this very night—! But you'd have to promise me to get the poachers away! Make them promise to leave my—my friends alone! Leave them free to go! Help my friends to get away safe!"

Lance had apparently been so intent on his own

thoughts that he had not noted the change in Judy's tones. To Lance, the girl was still only an extra pretty little half-breed. He scowled darkly in the moonlight and his eyes leered down on Judy.

"I haven't the power," said he. "I'll tell you all my plans soon—*after—after* I have those jewels, my pretty maid! D'you hear?"

"Of course!" Judy's hands were clasping her knees as she rocked back on the grass mat and gazed up into Lance's face. "Native girl, her unnerstan' very well." Then Judy's voice deepened and she sat close to the youth, grasping his hands in her slender brown hands as she went on: "Judy think that Lance Drybread he go back to Angka by way of the unnergroun' river through the far back Caves of the Whalers? Is it so, Lance Drybread? *Two* great unnergroun' stream on Kala. One flow east to the Sea Lion Pool. *Other flow south to Angka!*"

Then Lance sprang to his feet. He lifted his cane and his face in the moonlight was white with fury. "For the love of heaven, what do you know about that underground river?" demanded he.

"Oh, Indian girl, Aleut girl, she know all things of the island—all things of that unnergroun' river! Judy her swim that river many times right in the dark! She jus' tell fren's! Lance and Judy fren's!"

"By cracky! I'll say we are! You must be some swimmer, Judy! They brought me over another way! Blindfolded me, into the bargain! Must be something awfully precious about the Caves of the Whalers!

Lissen! Lissen to me, little Siwashy! Between us, we can just about cash in on the whole works! The crowd on Angka and the outfit here, all right in our grasp! Both islands, I tell you! *Whoopee!"*

"Please don' upset the boat!"

Lance leaned forward now and talked to Judy in a tone so low that, try as he would, Phil couldn't overhear a single word, except, just at the last, the girl's crooning: "Yes, to-morrow night. You come to get Judy and her stones, is that it?"

There came the sound of another whispered communication and then the dory was freed from its painter. Rusty oarlocks creaked as the boat pulled away for shore. Within a half hour, Lance Drybread came rowing back. Expertly he tied up to the *Aphoon* and climbed aboard the cruiser.

The deck lantern was dark. Drybread made his way to the dining saloon. As he crossed the deck, he thought that he heard the sound of scurrying feet. Cautiously he moved on. Evidently the members of the cruise were so gullible that to-night, of all nights, they were going to let him range at will about the cruiser! These Yukoners were certainly gullible! He'd know all the lay of the boat by morning. Know whether "theese boys" had bartered their gold for a letter of credit at the Nome bank! He'd know a lot of other things, too!

Lance opened the door into the dining saloon. The room was dark. No one at home! Everybody comfy in the staterooms downstairs? So much the better! Lance took out his electric torch from his pocket. He with-

drew again to the deck. He examined hatches and companion stairs, examined the wheel and the magnetic compass and the mahogany binnacle. Cautiously he made his way aft and found to his surprise that the deck cabin was lighted. With a casual air he opened the door and crossed the threshold, stumbling as he stepped down to the lowered stair into the saloon. He found Irene and Jeyna reading as they sat side by side on the banquette along the wall. Dr. Robson had a chart of the Bering Sea spread out on the table. He looked up briefly as the youth entered the room, then turned again to his chart. Lance asked for Phil and Boris. No one knew for certain where they were. Irene's cheeks were very pink. Perhaps she was reading a thrilling story. Lance made his way across the room and stood looking down at the girl and the book. *The White Whale of Tannak* didn't sound exciting!

"Say, has anyone ever told you how pretty you are?" he demanded, stooping a little to look ardently into Irene's eyes.

"Do you really think that I am?" Irene smiled faintly.

Lance nodded, but his glance lost its warmth. Just in time he had bethought himself! Irene, to be sure, was an uncommonly pretty girl, much more to his taste than the girl Judy. The little native girl, certainly, must have come on her father's side, from a long line of pretty keen-witted Russians. She was, of course, the child of some Russian fisherman who had married an Aleut woman here on Kala. Lance must be wary! The stones of Nertchka and the nuggets from the Amoor

were now almost within his grasp. He mustn't complicate matters by making Judy jealous! You never could tell which way a jealous dame would jump!

"Wayne and Asche gone?" he repeated for the second or the third time. He picked up a book that lay on the table, flipped back the cover, then shut the book and tapped on the volume with his forefinger.

Irene waved her hand toward a clutter of fishlines that lay in a tangle on a chair.

"Really, we don't know, exactly!" she insisted. "The last time we saw them they were wrangling about the kind of tackle to use for taking halibut."

"Gone fishing, eh?" Lance's eyes lighted under his overhanging dark brows.

Irene's glance caught that gleam in his eyes and her own glance stiffened.

"Guess I'll turn in, then," said Lance.

"You must be tired to death!" said Irene slowly. "Phil thought that you'd rather sleep in the pup tent on the deck where Billy often liked to sleep. There's a good cot. You'll find a pile of warm blankets, too. Phil left special word that the pup tent was to be yours."

For a moment the boy was taken aback. Then a look of cunning replaced the expression of annoyance, and, saying "Good-night," Lance curtly made his exit.

After the door to the outside had closed on Lance's departure, Dr. Robson said, "You're pretty certain that Boris will come back to guard everything below decks?"

"Yes. He'll be there all night!"

"And Phil?"

Irene leaned her elbows on the table and cupped her chin in her hands.

"We haven't the least idea where Phil is!" said she. "He's been gone since suppertime. Neither Jeyna nor I have seen him since then."

CHAPTER XV

UNDERGROUND WATERS

PHIL WAYNE was standing on the narrow platform in front of the Caves of the Whalers. Carefully packed in waterproof *pooksak* under his right arm he carried a revolver and ammunition, a hunting knife in a sheath, and a great coil of kelp rope in appearance much like a lot of cod-line.

Focusing his electric torch on the floor of the cavern, Phil crossed the threshold and moved across the rock pavement. As he moved on, he noted with astonishment that the mysterious sealskin sacks no longer hung suspended from their beams of driftwood. Where had they disappeared? Had the prowlers on Ankga removed them, only to dispose of them later to individual collectors or to museums "outside"? He had little time for weighing the possible fate of the ancient relics. He stood stock-still and his right hand shook a little as an owl almost brushed his cheek in startled flight into a deeper aisle of the cavern.

Cautiously Phil looked about him. Seen in the faint torch light the outer cavern appeared to end about ten feet ahead in a wall of rock. When, however, Phil, advancing, reached this wall, he saw, off toward the right, a group of pillars that formed a gateway. Beams from

one side to the other of the passageway told the skipper that there, too, had once hung a row of the ancient sealskin sacks; or, rather, a row of what Phil now believed to have been pseudo-funerary sacks. Had the sacks been merely Karazoff's cleverly made replicas intended to fool and terrify the unwary Aleut hunter who, stormbound or lost, might chance to enter here?

Phil rounded the little angle beside the pillars of basalt and found himself in a great open chamber.

He swung the electric torch in a wide arc. The light glanced from the walls of the cavern and caught the reflection of thousands of infinitesimal sparkling particles. Phil saw now that the walls of the cavern were honeycombed with what looked to him to be small caves—openings in the walls—openings hewn out, undoubtedly, by human hands! Below the mouths of these wall-openings piles of talus drift cluttered the floor.

Phil crossed to the nearest drift. With his torch close to the wall he focused the light and with straining eyes took in the sight thus revealed to him: Gold! There was gold in the Whalers' Caves!

No wonder that Karazoff had tried to warn the ships away! No wonder that he had tried to conceal the sources of his wealth! To keep secret to himself and Chen Luen alone the existence on Kala of a golden stream of wealth—as tangible as a tundra niggerhead! As intangible as a sunrise! Right here on Kala—gold!

His breath choking his throat now, Phil sank down on his knees and rested his left hand on a pile of talus while with his right hand he thrust the torch closer to the wall so that the light seemed almost like a magnet

drawing—drawing out—the bits of gold from the treasure vein!

"Gold in place! Gold in place!" he whispered. "Some earthquake has broken open a vein of pure gold just where you'd expect to find it—and never *would* find it! Talk about Karazoff's luck!"

Then a sudden anger choked Phil. His face flushed and he straightened up to ease the pull on his leg muscles and at the same time he gave a disgusted, "The old skeezix!"

Had he now found out the reason for Karazoff's disappearance? Karazoff had certainly gone over the side of the *Aphoon* as a hoax! To the man who had learned the art of swimming early in life off the beach at Waikiki, in the surfs of Hawaii's waters, the feat would not have been hard! Risky? Yes. In waters cold as the pole, very risky. But to a man inured to cold and privation, to a man of Karazoff's grim will and purpose, possible. To hold the breath for some distance under water, to come up, to drift a little with the current and the ground swell, to go down again, then to bring up to the surface and make for a near-by island—thus—*thus* ridding oneself of a ward of whose responsibility one had long since tired! There was simply nothing impossible in that.

The coward—Karazoff! The arrant coward! Phil's anger settled down on him like an actual thick fog which distorts and twists the shapes of objects. Why, this gold of Kala belonged to Judy, too! At least by rights it should sometime come to Judy!

Chen Luen? The recollection of Chen Luen's quietly

told tale came again now to Phil. There had been nothing mysterious or eerie about Chen Luen. As Karazoff had paid the fishermen years ago for their winter work of hauling timbers from the driftwood for the building of Crageagles cabins, so Karazoff had at first, probably, paid Chen Luen for working all the year round in the Caves of the Whalers, mining the gold. Perhaps only after a long time had the shipwrecked Chinaman become so valuable in service to Karazoff that the old Russian had taken him on as a business partner. Chen Luen had told the members of the cruise nothing but the truth. In order to avoid being seen by the alert Judy, the Chinaman had lived on Angka, coming over to the mine by way of the underground river. When the Soviet miners came for the sulphur, when the poachers came for otter, each in season, then Chen Luen removed for a time to Kala.

So Phil arrived at what later proved to be the exact situation.

Now the skipper, stumbling against a rectangular slab of stones, started with surprise, then stooped down to observe. Right here he'd found Chen Luen's campfire site!

On the huge rectangle were the burned-out ashes of a campfire—of many campfires. Gray ashes and charred bits of driftwood lay on the center of the slab of stone. There were two small iron kettles and a frying pan. And at the right of the stone, in an iron pot, or container, were dried sphagnum moss and a lot of sulphur for fuel.

The moss and the sulphur and the ashes from the

old fires answered a question that for some time Phil had been pondering: why was the cavern free from the bats that so often make caves not only loathsome but impossible or next to impossible of exploration?

Doubtless once the Caves of the Whalers *had* furnished harborage for thousands of bats—hordes of bats! Then Karazoff and Chen Luen had found the cavern. Prospecting operations—the mining venture—had brought the moss fires and the sulphur smoke. And the fumes had done for the bats!

Phil straightened up. He moved on swiftly, hardly pausing to glance at the places where little piles of rock showed that Chen Luen had made tentative diggings—searching for gold. Presently, he found himself within the sound of waters moving somewhere. That sound brought him to an abrupt halt. He did not intend to plunge unawares into some blind river down there below in the dark!

He looked about him, throwing the torch fore and aft in a sweeping movement that brought each side of the cave into view. Suddenly he leaped aside and hid behind a pile of rock that stood like a heap of cinders just at his left hand. From this shelter, he thrust out his head and stared unbelieving into the dark void. One click of his thumb-nail and he had shut off the light of his torch! And now, from deep within the cathedral caverns to the right, there came the faint gleam of an approaching light.

Phil waited.

The light disappeared. Phil found himself shivering

with a kind of taut apprehension such as he had never before known.

Should he go on? And just around the corner come bumping into one of Pougher's gang? Yes, he *must* go on. If he went on, he'd be doing the best he knew how to do. He'd let it go at that!

He dropped down a series of ledges that descended abruptly in low steps for a distance of what Phil thought must be fully one hundred feet or more. Still the trail led down. The walls of the cavern arched higher and higher. Down again the steps in the rock descended. Phil kept on going down, stepping carefully, not risking accident in thoughtless hurry.

Finally he reached the lowest step in the deep well and found himself in a vast bowl-shaped cavern. The bowl itself was perhaps one hundred feet across, arched over with spans of volcanic rock. Almost at his feet, just below the level of the floor, a ledge of lava two feet wide formed a natural landing-place.

Phil stooped down and focused his torchlight. He gazed down. Yes, there below the landing-stage swept a black flood of waters, the underground river of Kala, fed, doubtless, by a glacial stream high up in the Kala hills. Floods of black water, flowing slow and steady as Fate, through the lowest depths of the Caves of the Whalers—under the strait of Kala!

How had this bed of rock been riven for the passage of the stream? By earthquake? By some powerful force of plunging waters in æons past? Phil smiled now to himself as he recalled his desperate plan of swinging out from Kala to the lower wall of Angka, over the

terrible boiling whirlpools of the strait. How different would be his passage now on the flood of this smooth stream!

He dropped to one knee and swept his fingers through the water. As he had foreseen, the stream had a pleasant warmth. Some underground heating-plant again!

At the left of the landing-stage Phil found attached to a jutting rock an old worn rope that stretched away out of sight along the rock wall in the direction that Phil thought must be south. The line was a little slack, but the skipper judged that for years past it had been used by Chen Luen as a guide rope when the Chinaman negotiated the stream back and forth between the two islands.

Suddenly Phil stood up and slapped his thigh softly. He had it now! This was the very stream which, through the Zeiss glasses, he had observed pouring out in a great current beyond the pass of Kala, from under arched caverns. Probably those caverns were much like these on Kala. They had their outlet into the sea over there on Angka! *Whoopee!*

Phil's plans were swiftly made. Taking a second torch from his pocket, he hid it in a crevice of the rock on the ledge where he was standing. He stripped off trousers and coat and stockings and shoes, and stood prepared for a plunge—already in his swimming kit, which he had worn under his outer garments. In the waterproof sealskin sack slung over his shoulders by rawhide ropes, he carried his torch, his revolver, and the fifty fathoms of kelp line coiled close.

He slid down the wall to the landing-stage. He must remember, when he came back, if he ever came back, just where the steps led out of the water. He wondered how deep the stream was. He was not especially nervous or worried. If Chen Luen could do this thing, perhaps Phil Wayne could do it, too!

There was no time for testing the depth of the stream. Phil thanked his stars that the earthquake of æons ago had arched the roof of the stream. He wouldn't like to be smothered between here and Angka!

Testing the guide rope as he dropped, holding his torch high with his left hand, he lay flat on the tide and gave himself to the stream. He floated out slowly, slowly, his right hand grasping the guide rope securely and yet without jerkiness or pulling.

To one trained as Phil had been to hard physical feats on trail and river and sea, the procedure he was following was not difficult. He moved on down the flood. Then suddenly, obeying some instinct that came from he didn't know where, he held the rope taut and, swift as a seal, submerged.

Someone was following after him! He felt the guide rope tauten under his hand. Someone had grasped the kelp line and was tugging away at it like sixty! By gerry! Phil felt for a moment as if he were swooning, and yet, all the time, every sense was alert. He had no fear at all now. He was in for it! He'd go through with it!

He came up for air. And that instant, there was someone there behind him—at his feet—rather! Phil lurched up to find himself looking straight into the eyes

of Judy Ivanoff! Phil could have shouted from relief and joy!

Judy held in her right hand an electric torch of what to the startled Phil looked to be 1,000 candle power! The light flooded the cavern. It showed Phil Judy's golden-brown hair floating out on the water. Judy was wearing the little swimming suit of sealskin with the thin lining of warm flannel—her favorite kit.

Swung about the girl's shoulders was one of the soft, pliable sealskin bags, blown up full of air and tied, and thus transformed into a sort of lifebuoy. Strings tied to the bag and slipped over the back of the swimmer brought the home-made, native-made life preserver under the chest of the swimmer. The buoy itself would almost carry the girl along on this smooth flood!

"Phil!" exclaimed Judy. "How did you ever dare come?"

And now Phil observed that Judy, too, had a small coil of kelp line slung somehow over one shoulder.

"Come along and help me!" Judy commanded him. "There's a place back here where the guide rope is weak. I must mend it." Judy turned and the two made for the cavern and the landing-place, higher up the stream.

Within a few moments the two were conferring together in hushed tones. They were meanwhile stringing out fresh lengths of kelp line to "stay" the old guide lines. Phil hadn't noted the weak spots in the old rope. He was a little nettled when he considered his own carelessness. Judy, it appeared, had already tested every inch of the line from here to Angka. Especially had she

proved the lengths near the jutting rocks or crags where Chen Luen or Karazoff had snubbed the ropes as they might sling a ship's line and catch it about a mooring-bitt.

"We must hurry!" said Judy. "I've already been over to Angka reconnoitering. It's as easy as swimming in the Sea Lion Pool. I found right where Chen Luen keeps his supply of kelp line. It's in a little pool back there in the first chamber, high up. He keeps it moist, you see, so that the lengths don't become too brittle."

Though she talked of hurry, Judy's tones were quiet, her words absolutely unhurried. Observing her calm acceptance of things as they were, Phil found his tension relaxing, as a good swimmer's body relaxes in water.

"I've got Billy and Chen Luen safe over there at the Angka end of the river," calmly Judy announced. "But they're sort of done in. Chen Luen has a lame foot and Billy is suffering from dizziness. Too much fish for Billy and too few salads of elderberry tips, and too few messes of lettuce and radishes from Crageagles garden, that's all!"

"Chen Luen—Billy!" exclaimed Phil. "My Lordy!"

Judy went calmly on:

"Yes, we'll have to bring them over on the little raft of kelp and driftwood down there. I towed it over to Angka some time ago. Billy can't swim. Of course you know that. Chen Luen poles the raft over, he says, but the guide rope is surer and swifter. You and I will steer and push. We'll have plenty of kelp line with us in case the rope along the wall gives way."

"Judy, tell me! How did you manage?" Curiosity was too much for Phil. He *must* know how Judy had managed. So she told him.

"It was easy," said she simply. "The sulphur miners left Angka in a hurry yesterday noon while Pougher and his men were gone. Billy and Chen Luen had a tent north of the camp toward the caverns. Of course none of the poachers or the sulphur miners, either, ever dreamed that any of us could find the way to Angka. Probably Pougher hadn't really told them all he knows about the underground river."

Late last night, it appeared, the daring Judy had gone down the underground river and had fearlessly explored the site of the Angka camp. Naturally, neither Pougher nor Simborski had dogs in camp. So Judy had nothing to fear from prowling dogs or sudden outcry from a dog corral.

How had she located Billy's camp?

Well, if Phil must know, she had recognized that terrible snore of Billy's—a snore so resounding that she had sometimes laughed to herself at night as she'd followed the trail to Crageagles. Had Phil never heard Billy's snore rolling out from the afterdeck of the cruiser?

Phil nodded. He knew that snore of old. There wasn't any doubt that Judy could know where Billy bivouacked if Billy was snoring.

The men in the camp worked hard all day. They slept like lumbermen and ate like Shansii and his tribe. So it had been easy for Judy to lead Chen Luen and Billy slowly away from the sleeping camp.

The story ended, Judy floated out again on the flood of the underground river. Phil followed. Slowly they moved on, testing the guide ropes. Loop by loop along the length of the guide they worked their way toward Angka.

And after a long time the smooth stream brought them into another great chamber much like the Kala caverns. And there, on the narrow ledge, hunched like two overgrown rabbits, sat Billy and Chen Luen.

Without a word, now, her hand to her lips to command silence, Judy motioned the two to the side of the stream where a raft, like the rafts of kelp and driftwood in the fishing harbors, lay rocking on the flood, its hawser looped about a boulder of lava.

The raft sank with the weight of the two men when Billy's weight was added to Chen Luen's as they sought foothold on the wobbly platform. Judy motioned for Billy to get off. Then, with whispered direction to Phil, she took a long pole from the shelf of rock behind her and directed Chen Luen to take his old place on the raft. He would pole himself, would Chen Luen, just as he had done hundreds of times before this.

"The men from Angka are planning to come to Kala to-night, Phil!" Judy warned the skipper. "And whatever happens to-day (it's early morning now!), don't try to find Chen Luen or me. We'll be busy. Take Billy to the old salt house. There's food for him there, and *makings* for a little fire, and some coffee and tea. Don't let Pougher or his men see Billy until they come up into the highest cavern—the battleground!"

Phil nodded gravely.

"They're coming about seven! I heard them talking in their dory just after dark. I was a white fox on the hill, that's all! And oh, Phil! Be careful! Orca Pougher is not an old man! He must have been just a little shaver the first time he came to Kala. I heard the rascals last night planning how they'd explain things to the officials at Juneau! They plan to report the cruiser shipwrecked in a tidal wave! How they laughed when they talked about it!"

In another minute Judy was gone. And with Chen Luen pulling and poling and Judy shoving and hauling, the little raft moved away out of sight on the stream.

Cautiously Phil put a question to Billy, who still appeared to be dazed.

How had the poachers got him over to Angka? Billy shook his head.

"Me dunno!" slowly he said. "Sitting nice and dandy smoking on the afterdeck that night. Wake up in poacher camp with sore head. Sleep mos' two days—mebbe three days!" Billy rubbed his head ruefully and closed his eyes again. His head dropped on his chest.

Phil let his old pal sleep until the sound of the approaching raft came through the dark caverns. Then he roused the mate, and with Judy's help got him somehow down the sloping ledge to the raft. Onto the raft at last! And in silence, with Judy ahead, towing expertly, and with Phil in the water behind, pushing and prodding, somehow they got Billy across to the caverns of Kala.

Before the journey was half over, Phil found himself worn with fatigue. How *could* Judy keep going?

It must be almost six o'clock in the morning now. It seemed to Phil *ages* since he had overheard Lance Drybread and Judy talking together in the twilight of the harbor.

When the raft had been tied to the lava boulder by means of the hawser, and Billy had been safely landed on the floor of the lower cavern, Judy insisted on taking the raft back again to Angka in order that the poachers might not suspect that their prisoners had escaped on this driftwood contraption over the Kala River. Phil objected to Judy's plan. It wasn't right for her to go again. But Judy was obdurate. Phil had his work cut out for to-night. He must save his strength till then, till he should tackle the poachers as they came up from the mouth of the cavern and should wallop all of them!

In the end Judy had her way.

Gray wolf-brush dawn was just streaking the sky when the two boys left the caves of Kala and, hurrying down the trails, arrived within a short time at the old salt house. There was no window at all in the old building. With the aid of his torch, however, Phil found, over in one corner, a square box perched high on legs of driftwood.

The box had been filled with earth to form a safe fire box for small fires. Phil had seen scores of similar contrivances in the cabins of trappers in the Cascades. Swiftly Phil started a little fire, a fire so small and yet so intense that not much smoke rose to fill the great room.

In a high cupboard on the wall the two found supplies of food in glass jars and water in a stone jug.

There were black bread and dried salt fish and a roast goose and jars of coffee and tea. There were two graniteware kettles and a frying pan. On the lowest shelf Phil discovered six eggs that had been taken from brine for cooking.

Tacked to one end of the fire box was a little note scrawled in Judy's straight, up-and-down script: "Phil, you're supposed to have gone fishing last night."

Phil made the tea. Then the two boys ate ravenously of the roast goose. Afterward, in slow, painstaking speech, almost as if he were learning a new tongue, Billy tried to explain how things had been with them on Angka. It seemed that the Simborski faction had been interested in "saving their own skins," as Billy put it!

Yesterday the men had broken camp, loaded their provisions and as much of their machinery as they could swiftly dismantle, and had boarded ship and steamed off, leaving on Angka only Pougher and his two natives, and, Billy thought, Lance Drybread. No one, though, had seen Lance for two days, over there on Angka.

"Well, *we've* seen him!" Phil's jaws clicked as he snapped out the words.

Why had the Russians gone so fast? Billy's eyes brightened and he leaned toward Phil, stooping down a little from the box, where he was tending a tiny fire that sizzled under the teapot.

"Them Simborski they see airplanes sailing high sou' by sou'west. They 'fraid him gov'ment airmans. Make the air survey of the Aleutians like newspapers her say: ' 'Merican Navy send out Aerial Survey on

Aleutian Islands. Under command Lieutenant Carter.' And all the time, U. S. S. *Gannet,* airplane tender, her not so far in offing! Russians very scared they soon get caught now. So soon's airplane her sail out of sight, them Russians make the quick go from Angka!"

No, Billy didn't think that Pougher and his men knew anything about the plane. All that day they had been holding practice in the caverns. Billy knew that the native hunters didn't want to crawl through the caverns clutching the ropes! But Pougher was going to make 'em go! With Pougher behind him, even an Eskimo would try to swim!

Phil laughed. He sprang to his feet and to Billy's astonishment gave in pantomime three silent but powerful *rah-rah-rahs!*

So the airplane survey of the Aleutians had really come to pass! Well, the Navy Department had promised the Alaskan Territory just that thing! Phil recalled Jeyna's great sign on the Rock Meadows. Good for Jeyna! It was a blessed thing that *one* of the "foursome" had been "air-minded!"

Before he went up into the hills and the caverns for his own tussle with the poachers, Phil would himself carry up three or four sacks of sulphur to the Rock Meadows landing-field. The sulphur, together with Jeyna's supply of dried sphagnums and pieces of driftwood, would make her S O S and her ninety-foot arrow indicating the landing-field—why, they'd make those symbols blaze to the very skies to-night, and to-morrow night, and every night hereafter so long as the *Aphoon* lay at anchor in Kala Harbor! Talk about cleverness!

But suddenly Phil's thoughts brought up with a start: *How had Jeyna known?*

Trust Jeyna to find out things! Why hadn't she told the rest of them? And yet—what would have been the advantage in her telling? If nothing ever came of Jeyna's "hunch," the disappointment would have been all the greater! No, Jeyna had been right. Jeyna was *always* right. Ask Doc Gale if she wasn't!

Phil's thought came back to Angka and to Pougher and his men and the Caves of the Whalers.

Billy was sitting now on a wide shelf that ran along the side of the salt house about three feet up the wall. Billy's head was nodding. His eyes were closed.

Phil found the roll of blankets that Judy had stored in the corner on a little platform. He spread out one blanket, then, crossing to the shelf where Billy lay relaxed and slumped against the wall, he managed to get the mate over the rough floor to the platform. He rolled Billy in a blanket, piled another blanket upon him for good measure, and left him.

The skipper made his way outside and down to the landing. At the old wharf Irene was waiting for him in the dory. She had been here, she said, for a long time; ever since Judy had come to tell them that Phil would be coming along soon. No, Judy had said that she couldn't wait. Judy had looked worried, but not so very tired. She was planning to spend the day with her neglected Sun-up-sun, and Ilak and Tipii up there at the cabins. Perhaps, too, she'd go for a swim in Sea Lion Pool just before dinner to-night. Something had come over Judy. For the past two days she hadn't been

feeling sociable or friendly, but appeared to want to stay by herself. Irene hoped that Judy would get over her "grouch" before long!

After a short nap, when he had flung himself down exhausted on his berth, Phil was up for breakfast. Then, with Aunt Linda herself standing watch on deck, Phil in the dining saloon told of the events that had happened since last evening. He told all about his listening in to Judy's conversation with Lance Drybread.

As Phil's tale progressed, Jeyna's face, exotically pale, as always, grew even more white, with a kind of flaming whiteness, like a mask of silver.

So Judy Ivanoff had really offered Lance her precious stones if Lance would persuade Orca Pougher to give up his designs on the *Aphoon!* And this was the girl, this little Judy, whom in her thoughts and once or twice in argument with Boris, Jeyna Asche had called a *little barbarian!*

Jeyna's eyes sought out Boris. Was he recalling that phrase—*little barbarian*—and the scorn in Jeyna's tone when she had uttered the words?

Evidently Boris was not recalling anything of the kind. He was standing now with his hands in his pockets, his shoulders hunched, his chin drawn in, and a thoughtful frown between his dark eyes.

"Drybread up at Crageagles *now?*" he exclaimed. "Then I'm going, too!"

With a gesture of command Phil interrupted.

"Don't go now," said he. "Lance has enough to worry about right this minute, and as a matter of fact, we don't know *where* the rascal is! And don't worry

about Judy, Boris. Chen Luen is up there at Crageagles with her and Tigil. And next to a gunboat, I'd back Chen Luen as a protective measure when he once gets started!"

Boris and Irene gasped delightedly when Phil told of the airplane and the airplane tender, the U. S. S. *Gannet.*

Jeyna looked demure.

"Those letters—S O S! The ninety-foot arrow! Jeyna, how ever did you know?" gasped Irene.

"I found the newspaper clipping among Karazoff's papers, Irene," calmly Jeyna explained. "The account said that about the last of August—from then until the September storms set in, Lieutenant Carter would be mapping the Aleutians from the air. That gave me the idea. I couldn't bear to tell you, for fear that nothing would come of it but disappointment. So, as old Karazoff said, I 'arrogated to myself the rôle of Fate'!"

At sunset time Judy came running down the trail to the old wharves where she was met by the "foursome" from the *Aphoon.* Phil and Boris were on their way right now to get Billy Baxter. Since he had slept and eaten and had had time to realize that he was free once more, Billy was himself again.

Judy was in a great hurry. Once more she was wearing her swimming suit of the harbor or barrel seal. Over her shoulders she had flung the great cloak of ermine collared in cross-fox. She wanted to know where Aunt Linda might be found.

"Standing the watch this evening!" explained Boris. "I'll take you over now!"

"Oh, thanks, Boris!" Judy nodded happily. "I just want to leave my precious ermine wrap with her. Heft it, Jeyna!" Jeyna caught at the cloak when Judy tossed it over. Judy giggled with delight when Jeyna gasped:

"Good gracious, Judy Ivanoff! What *have* you done to this fur?"

"Oh, just a few jewels and a few nuggets and a few precious bits of lapis lazuli are sewed up in the seams!" joyously Judy announced in a hushed voice. "I'm going to leave it with Aunt Linda. I had a—a conference with Lance Drybread and gave him an emerald ring in trade for a promise from him that he'd do his best to protect certain friends of mine to-night. Then along came Chen Luen to interrupt the bargain. Lance dashed out and away. Come on, Boris, we must hurry. The crew from Angka will be on Kala in just two hours!"

"Two hours! How ever did you find out?" demanded Irene.

Judy leaned back from her place in the departing dory and said in a low voice, over her shoulder:

"I can't seem to keep away from that underground river! This afternoon I floated over to Angka and listened in on a conference between Pougher and his men. They were just outside the caverns. They think that the Russians took Billy and Chen Luen with them, and since they haven't seen Lance, either, for some time, they fear that he went too! I heard Pougher order his men to have the power schooner ready by seven. Right after that they're to report at the Angka caverns!"

The dory made off in the direction of the cruiser. The

oarlocks creaked and great circles swept away from the boat out toward the shores in a rippling wake of bubbles as Boris pulled away.

"Seven o'clock!" thought Phil to himself. "That gives us a nice lot of daylight yet."

"Irene, did you see that the torches were ready?" he asked. Irene and Jeyna ran a step or two to catch up with Phil as he made for the salt house and Billy. It was Phil's third trip to the salt house since noon.

"Yes, I have four ready," Irene assured the skipper. "I've a lot of sphagnum moss and some sulphur, too, so that we can whack together another torch if we use up these I have ready."

"The thing ought to be settled long before the second torch is gone," Phil said quietly.

When at length with Billy and Boris and Judy and Irene, Phil led the way up the trail past Crageagles, they all looked in vain for Jeyna. She had disappeared, no one knew whither. Nor did they so much as catch a glimpse of Lance Drybread. Judy was certain that Lance had not returned to Angka. Since morning Chen Luen had maintained a pretty thorough watch over the trails to the Caves of the Whalers. Chen Luen hadn't seen Lance since early morning. Well, let him go!

The three boys were carrying coils of ship's line to bind their captives in case they were so fortunate as to "capture the captives." They would bind the men, strap down their arms, and then herd them in a guarded line from the caverns to the old salt house. Here, with plenty of water to quench their thirst, and a lot of

black bread, the rascals could be herded until the cruiser could make off for Dutch Harbor and could report the matter to the captains of the revenue cutters that guarded the sea herds. Pougher's stock of stolen gasoline would fuel the cruiser, after all!

CHAPTER XVI

STRIFE

AT HALF-PAST six the three boys were sitting at the top of the long flights of stone steps, or ledges, that led from the lowest caves and from the River of Kala to the upper caverns. High up on the east wall of the cave, hidden behind a little barrier of rock for all the world like the "pulpit" of the *Aphoon,* Irene lighted a small torch. Let the poachers think what they would of the torchlights! Probably the men would believe that their leader, Pougher, had taken extra pains to make their arrival on Kala auspicious.

Silently they waited, ranged along the shadowy walls of the great cave. At length, far below, from the very depths of the caves, there came the sound of splashing waters. Then there came the sound of groanings and mutterings. The sound of bare feet on wet rock. The man was working his way up the stairs. He was sitting down on the ledge at the top of the stairway.

His head in his hands, he sat there a moment, groaning and mumbling. In an instant the three boys set upon him. They had a dehaired sealskin over his mouth to prevent outcry! Stricken dumb with terror and amazement, the fellow made no attempt to protect himself from these assailants. He scarcely moved as they laid

him down on the floor and wrapped him about with coils of the ship's line.

Then Boris and Billy dragged him out of the trail that led from the upper cavern. He could wait.

And by and by there came a second native. This time the poacher proved to be a little fellow. He followed almost the exact procedure of the first, even to the moaning and groaning and muttering. Billy handled him alone.

And, now, there in the cavern a tension almost palpable to the touch drew the air taut. In the faint glow of the torch Phil's face showed drawn and white with suspense. Back in the shadows waited Boris. He gave no heed to his "game" foot. He was alert, lithe, ready to spring at Phil's command into action.

They could picture Pougher now, coming slowly, floating on the river tide, his left hand on the guide ropes, his right reaching out from a ponderous arm, pushing aside the waters as he came. A great fat walrus of a man—slowly nearing the landing-stage.

They heard him lunging up out of the river. They heard the streams of water fall away from arms and legs and torso as the giant emerged, lifted himself clear, flung himself full length on the ledge.

Phil was watching the top step of the stone ladder. He'd wait till the last minute! He'd wait till the very minute when Orca Pougher reached the level floor beyond the pillar! And now Pougher was coming! Like the ogre of a fairy tale emerging from a bottomless black well, the giant head, the giant himself thrust out from the darkness. His great shoulders, his body, his

round, bulging legs! Pougher was here! He was glancing about him suspiciously, wiping the water from his eyes again, wondering about the lighted torch.

Suddenly, as Pougher reached the level beyond the pillars, the call of the cliff swallow rang out under the echoing roof. The signal! Another torch flared out, and Orca Pougher, looking down, saw the bound and huddled bodies of the two poachers who had preceded him up the river!

Pougher's head went down on his chest. He came shuffling toward Phil, dragging one foot after the other, his body swaying in a weaving, writhing movement, animal-like, menacing! Phil was ready for him. . . . Phil in his swimimng-kit, lithe and supple, and full of wrath!

Phil struck out. His blow caught the man's head up straight. The giant spread out both arms wide and came with a rush now, like a Kodiak bear on a rampage. If once the giant should grip Phil between those monstrous arms, the skipper would never again take his spoke at the wheel of the *Aphoon!*

Phil struck from his shoulder with all the power of his strong young body. He brought the man's head up again. The giant groaned and stooped lower. He moved forward slowly, lifted his arms and beat out in a series of dogged pounding blows. But Phil was out from under. Pougher stood for a moment lunging forward as he missed his aim and beat the empty air with his fists.

Then Phil dodged as the giant swooped suddenly and tried to rush him, arms open, head lowered, ready

to force him to the wall in a grappling in which Pougher would certainly come out victor.

Phil peppered his adversary with a swift spattering of blows—lefts and rights that dazed the giant.

Then once more Pougher straightened up suddenly and lashed out at Phil in a series of tremendous slow, sledge-like slashes that followed the boy as he dodged to left and right.

With apprehensive eyes, her hands on her lips, her breath choking her, Irene, high up on the ledge, leaned forward to follow the struggle. Now she gave a short, sharp scream.

The last blow had caught Phil as he tried to dodge. His foot caught in a projecting angle of rock and he stumbled and went down.

Pougher gave a hoarse cry of triumph. He was ready to lay hands on Phil and crush the breath out of his body. But again Phil was on his feet. He drew back. Then he darted like a falcon and before the giant could recover, he was at him again with a vicious spat of blows. Farther down came the big man's head. His eyes leered. His teeth, white, enormous, flashed in the light like walrus tusks, Irene thought, shrinking back from the sight as the man faced the glare from the torches.

The man came at Phil now, bobbing and weaving, his head wagging and his shoulders lunging forward as he dragged his feet along in that old menacing advance.

As he faced the light, Olympian shadows fought behind him and about him on the cavern walls and among the pillars of basalt.

And now Phil took the offensive. Making a battering-ram of his slender, wiry body, with its broad shoulders and slender hips, he dashed forward, swept the poacher aside, and landed him a blow on the right and another on the left. And then Pougher caught Phil. In his wrath, though, he let him slip. The giant's lips were white now with a froth of anger.

Weakened by the long struggle, puffing and gasping from spent wind, he came again! And gradually, with a start of terror, Phil realized that Pougher was crowding him toward the deadly narrow archway, where outside, hundreds of feet below the mouth of the cavern, were the pinnacle rocks above the shoal sands on the Bering Sea!

Irene saw, too, and Boris! Boris started forward, but Phil gasped out a warning shout, muffled through thick, swollen lips:

"My fight, old man! Get—get Irene away before—too late!"

But Irene would not go. Leave Phil now?

And then, there at the mouth of the cavern appeared Lance Drybread. He came gliding in with both arms outstretched in a grasping motion lunged for Phil. There came the call of the cliff swallow—the signal of warning from without the cavern. A shadow glided in—a slender shadow of a girl clad only in swimming kit of the pelt of the barrel seal. Swift as the flash of the aurora, the girl's arm lifted. The bolas flew, and the pebbles struck Lance Drybread between the shoulders and on the back of the head. Down he went, crumpling to the rock floor.

In the midst of the excitement caused by Lance's entrance into the cavern, a rain of pounding blows from the giant caught Phil confused and unaware. He tottered, fell, was up again, and then he grappled with his adversary. Twisting and dodging, they forced their way toward the mouth of the cavern. Outside somewhere a great glare of light filled all the sky.

"Jeyna's lighted all her beacon fires on the Rock Meadows!" thought Irene as she caught a glimpse of the reflected light through the broad arch of the entrance.

Pougher's breath was almost gone now. With one arm before his face he ducked down and then he stumbled. Phil watched as the man righted himself, then, with a lunge, the skipper hurled himself at the spent giant and with a tremendous blow bowled him right over.

"Where's the rope? Bring me some line!" gasped out Phil.

Boris had the ship's line ready. And within a few moments they had Pougher, too, trussed and ready for his descent by trail under guard of Billy and Boris, each with his .32 in hand. The two boys would stand guard here till the prisoners came to enough to walk without tumbling in front of their guards as they were marched off to the salt house and jail!

The battle over, Phil sat dazed and miserably full of aches and shooting pains while Irene and Judy ministered to him and gave him water to drink and applied cooling dashes of cold water from the river. But the waters of this underground river were not cold enough.

Phil longed for a freezing plunge into the waters of the harbor!

"I'm all right now!" finally he exclaimed. "Judy, you're the biggest trump alive! Gee! If it hadn't been for you——!"

Judy smiled with pleasure.

"It wasn't anything, Phil, not anything at all! I found Lance hidden away in one of the caves back of the cabins. I'd gone in to feed Ilak, you know. He'd been growling and making a fuss all the afternoon. I just about knew whom I'd find. So then, all there was to do was to follow after Lance. I'm glad I came—if you're glad, Phil!"

"Glad—!"

Hours afterward, too much excited still to think of rowing out yet to the *Aphoon,* Boris and Judy sat shoulder to shoulder on the high ledge that overlooked the barrier reef and the enclosed lagoon. Far outside, the waters of the North Pacific, shadowy and magically alive, shone faintly with the light of moon and stars.

And in his deep baritone Boris sang then the song that Judy loved:

"Drink to me only with thine eyes
And I will pledge with mine!"

And after that, Judy hardly had the heart to tell Boris that she wasn't going with them when they all sailed away from Kala. That was the big hitch in their plans. Judy wasn't going, after all! No matter how much they pleaded with her, Judy would not go!

"No, I can't go, Boris dear! Kay will be coming back

again. He gave me this chance to go freely and leave him. It was a foolish thing to do, but sometimes men do go roundabout, don't they? They're just like foolish little boys. Kay is afraid that I'll want to stay here always with him and Chen Luen. Afraid that I'll want to stay here to nurse him back to health again. There's a little summer settlement of Aleut fishermen on Ongoo. Perhaps that's where Kay went. Now Chak has gone to Ongoo. Perhaps to-morrow he'll be coming back to Kala. All these past weeks, I believe, he has been coming and going, reporting to old worried Kay how things are with us—with me! Kay's too ill to come, but don't be mistaken, he'll have sent word to the revenue cutters by this time. By and by, when Kay thinks that I have really gone, he'll come back to Kala!"

They sat still for a long time. The waters of the Whale Gates Pass and of the lagoon within the barrier beach shone with phosphorescent fire as fish or seal torpedoed through the waters of the flood tide.

"It will be worth everything to hear Kay saying, 'You didn't go, Judy! You didn't go!' " mused Judy.

Boris looked down at the girl beside him, her lovely face shadowy and exquisite in the moonlight. Judy turned her head and their eyes met. How courageous she was! How clever and enchanting! The soft curve of her cheek stirred him and his heart beat fast. He put his arms about her and drew her to him.

"Judy Ivanoff," he whispered, "don't make me wait forever!"

"No, not quite *forever!*" cried Judy. "Not really, quite—forever!"

CHAPTER XVII

DAWN ON KALA

EARLY the next morning Jeyna rowed herself in the old dory across the bay to the wharves. The day was breaking clear. The tide was coming in. The wind was at the heels of the tide coming through the Whale Gates. High between the Whale Gates it was piling the green and silver waters.

Jeyna beached the dory, climbed up the narrow ridge behind the beach, and turned toward the right below Crageagles trail. Then she skirted the caves and made for the Rock Meadows, where last night she had lighted in vain the beacon fires in the shape of the gigantic S O S and the ninety-foot arrow that marked the spot selected, Karazoff's Journals had said, as a landing-field for the Soviet airmen.

According to Billy's account, an airplane had flown over Angka late in the afternoon, two days ago. Would the plane return this way? Perhaps! If the boys were delayed to-day in transporting the stores of gasoline from Angka to Kala, if to-night again the *Aphoon* found herself still in Kala harbor, Jeyna would once more light the signal fires. With everyone excited at the prospect of an early departure from Kala, she'd have difficulty in getting anyone to help her collect

driftwood and sphagnum moss and sulphur for the fires, so she'd better get busy and help herself.

This early start would leave her free, later, to help in the getting-away tasks on board the cruiser.

Now Jeyna stood still in the trail and looked about. How the auklets and the sea parrots were screeching and scolding! Their lifting dark wings shadowed all the western sky as if a sudden cloud had rolled up from the Bering Sea!

And then, a moment later, Jeyna reached the edge of the Meadows.

Suddenly in the clear light of morning there came a bright shape flying from the southwest. With her hands at her throat, Jeyna gazed upward. Was this the golden eagle Kraaa? Could this be Skurrr, the bald eagle? "O God, let them see me!" Jeyna cried. Madly she tore off her red leather coat and standing there in the wilderness of cliffs and rocks, of green mosses and scrub willows, she waved the coat like a flag! A little banner beating itself out against the immensity of space! There were so many little pieces of cloud in the sky now! The airmen might not see her! How *could* they see her down here in the wilderness? Even if they caught sight of her, they would think her only an Aleut woman out early, for once, picking berries!

On even keel the great plane came speeding onward through the sky, its motor roaring from a wide-open throttle. They had seen her! The plane was wheeling about! And all that Jeyna could think of was a silly refrain: *"You glide eight feet forward for every one you come down! You glide eight feet forward . . .!"*

She stood breathless while with a powerful upward sweep of wings the plane shot into the golden reaches of the dawn about high Kala's peak. It circled, dipped, then with a soft rolling motion headed for the meadow!

And after all, it had been Jeyna's beacon fires last night that had drawn them back again to Angka and Kala! Their work almost finished, after charting more than 15,000 square miles of the Aleutian archipelago, the airmen had been returning to Dutch Harbor to meet two other amphibian planes, when they had seen outlined on the Kala meadows Jeyna's letters of fire—S O S.

Well, no, that hadn't been the Navy signal! But just for that reason Lieutenant Carter and his mechanic had been worried about things. So they had returned to-day, bringing with them this young physician who couldn't reach Kala fast enough!

Lieutenant Carter and the mechanic departed shortly for the harbor. They'd have a talk with Dr. Robson and Phil Wayne, Skipper, and then set out for Dutch Harbor. There they'd get the revenue cutters started down for Kala for the precious lot of otter poachers, Pougher and his crew, and for that most precious of all scalawags, Lance Drybread, for whom on several scores the government had for months been searching.

When they came back from Dutch Harbor they'd bring a supply of gas for the cruiser. With their Wright-engined Lockheed plane carrying their 370 gallons of gasoline, they'd soon tend to the refueling of the *Aphoon.*

And now the third member of the flying crew came up. Jeyna saw him afar off. The sun rolled up out of the east. His Midas-touch turned all the Kala range to gold. Through the Whale Gates the morning wind came stirring against Jeyna's hot cheeks. The wind smelled of the salt and the sea from the waters of the harbor. It smelled of bluebells and larkspur and wild geraniums from the flowers here on the wilderness edge of the meadows.

Lieutenant Carter and his mechanic were shadows drifting down the trails. Jeyna's dark eyes were aflame with light. With both hands outstretched she went to meet him—this third member of the airship's crew. All the time, she had known that he would come to find her—to find *her*—Jeyna Asche!

She had almost forgotten how tall and strong and handsome he was! She flushed and then grew pale, and the lovely color flooded her cheeks again.

"I knew that you would come!" she said.

A long time afterward the two went together down the trails.

A wild happiness beat against Jeyna's whole being as the wings of the sea birds beat against the wild sweet airs of Kala.

To-night, high on the cliffs above the Whale Gates Pass the two of them would sit, close together, tending the beacon fires on Kala.

But just now, there were so many things to do—so many messages to give! So many to hear! For one thing, they must tell Judy right away that yesterday brave old Chak had brought to Dutch Harbor from

Ongoo equally brave and courageous Karazoff, who there waited for his Judy of the islands!

Perhaps already Judy knew that they were coming with a message that would take her far from Kala!

Down by the wharves Dr. Gale and Jeyna found her, with her orange Sun-up-sun under her arm. Far behind her, dragging along unwillingly at the end of his leash, was Ilak. And after Ilak trailed Tigil, her arms full of blankets of reindeer and plaited furs. In her right hand Tigil carried a cage in which Whispii, the tame weasel, squatted happily. In her left hand, which was curved about the blankets, Tigil managed to carry a second cage, in which the great gray seagull, Tipii, held himself aloof, his yellow rimmed eyes fixed on the little space between the bars of his cage. Pretty soon, on deck the cruiser, he would be freed again, to perch thereafter happily on Judy's shoulder or on rail or deckhouse roof—safe at the end of his leash—safe from the threat of Kraaa or Skurrr or the Peale's falcon!

This side the wharf, Dr. Gale and Jeyna observed the halting of the procession of the islanders. Judy stood for a moment leaning against the ancient mast, from which dangled the kelp horn on its length of line. Then the girl lifted her round right arm and with slender tanned fingers held the horn to her lips and sounded a long, clear note.

On the instant the old dory put out from under the lee of the *Aphoon*. Toma the sea otter floated on the tide.

Her right hand still on the kelp horn, Judy stood

there, gazing sorrowfully out across the harbor. She had caught a glimpse of the otter and her pup playing in the rising flood.

"Perhaps we shall all come again sometime to Kala!" cried Judy breathlessly. "Since the *Aphoon* dropped her anchors here you have not come at all! To-day you come! The seals are going now. Soon will the Polar winds be blowing cold and bitter through the pass of the Whale Gates. Oh, Toma and Jutaa, good-bye! good-bye!"

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